



A HISTORY OF THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT
IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOLUME I
1707—1831

PURCHASED

**A
HISTORY
OF THE
FREEDOM MOVEMENT**

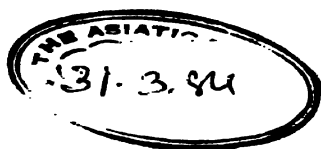
**(BEING THE STORY OF MUSLIM STRUGGLE FOR THE
FREEDOM OF HIND-PAKISTAN)**

**VOLUME I
1707—1831**



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The subcontinent of India and Pakistan possesses geographical features which have subjected it to many a historical conflict and confusion. The towering mountains in the north have not only protected its fertile northern plains from the icy winds of Siberia, but they have also isolated it from any extensive impact of the Mongolian races. The north-western mountains guard the Valley of the Indus; however, they are so formed that an enterprising horde could travel through the traversable passes, if they were not properly defended. The North-East is similarly defended and exposed, but the passes on this side have permitted peaceful migration and infiltration rather than large-scale invasion. The eastern marches of the subcontinent have not witnessed the political cataclysms, to which the lands of Central and Western Asia seem to be chronically subject; nor has East Asia produced philosophies which might rock the world. Thus the subcontinent is sufficiently isolated to encourage the growth of a certain homogeneity, but not completely sealed off from the world; the mountain walls are mostly high and impregnable, but there are big gateways which can be stormed and forced. Normally the dense jungles of the Eastern land frontiers, the icy wastes of Tibet, and the inhospitable mountainous deserts of Baluchistan and beyond do not encourage much migration; the robber infested passes through the western mountains prevent extensive intercourse with the rest of continental Asia; but the zeal of the missionary, the avarice of the trader or the audacity of the conqueror have time and again conquered these obstacles.

These factors have thrown into this habitat peoples, who, coming from more vigorous climates, have ultimately succumbed to the charms of a warmer climate and less strenuous methods of earning a more plentiful living. These very facilities contributed to an early development of civilization. Ideas grew in this climate as rapidly as the primitive jungles: the tropical forest provided an infinite detail of beauty and sensuousness; it could not, however, create well-defined silhouettes or encourage clarity of vision. The growth of ideas was also on the same pattern; they jostled with one another; there was an undergrowth of unbridled superstition and animism; above this rose the taller trees of unrestricted speculation with a dense foliage of detail and branches extending in all directions; philosophy and mythology were entwined like creepers; and the ceiling created by the foliage of detail often shut out the light of reason and limited it only to the higher tops; the wood could not be seen for trees. This was not an environment to encourage logical and clear thinking, the imposition of rational limits on thought or fundamental integration between philosophy, morality and imagination.

And, yet, even the jungle has certain principles of integration. The trees, the undergrowth and the parasites all flourish because the climate is suitable and the physical conditions favour their survival and growth. After the vegetation has been exposed to a period of struggle, the laws of natural selection kill those plants which cannot thrive in such surroundings. Indian thought, thus, in spite of unbridled speculation and a richness of variety, came to have a character, and began to evolve around certain basic ideas like the division of the population into *Varnas*, the law of *Karma*, the belief in the transmigration of the soul and an insistence upon conformity to the social code. It would be possible to find remote parallels to these notions elsewhere, but nowhere are they so well-defined, so basically important

in the social organisation, so intensely believed in and so rigidly practised. A society so devoted to speculative thinking and so used to differences in beliefs and convictions could not develop a creed to hold it together; yet it had to seek some method of integration and consolidation; it developed, therefore, the peculiar characteristic of ignoring belief and conviction and demanding the fullest conformity with its social code. This provided the main distinguishing feature of the Indian society and permitted the rapid absorption of foreign elements which did not hold any clearly defined or strongly held beliefs. It seemed so natural to follow the fashion of the people among whom the foreigners found themselves; it meant no great departure from their beliefs; and, in the beginning, their group consciousness received no shock because the group persisted in the shape of a living cell within this greater organism of Indian society, integrated, but not annihilated, a subcaste within a federation of similar groups.

The sea, in the earlier days, had been used by the Indians for commerce; but gradually the fear of losing caste because of the lack of facilities for observing their own taboos dissuaded them from seafaring, and contacts with the outside world decreased. A contempt for foreigners was the natural corollary of the exclusiveness which caste had created; a society which had divided itself into watertight compartments could not welcome contacts with outsiders. The word *Yavana*, derived from Ionia, was used for the Greeks when they came into contact with India; subsequently it came to be applied to all foreigners as a term of contempt. Later the foreigners came to be called *malichha* or 'unclean', probably because they did not follow the Hindu code of eating, drinking and untouchability.

Within the subcontinent, there is a great variety of geographical features and climates. The basins of the

Indus and the Ganges are fertile alluvial plains; the Western and Eastern Ghats, the Vindhya, the Satpuras, and the Aravali Hills divide up the land without creating effective barriers; the Deccan is a tableland, a distinctive area shut in by the Eastern and Western Ghats and the Vindhya and the Satpuras, but not too effectively for invasion by enterprising armies or peaceful penetration. Even where there are no great barriers, the dense forests, which existed as late as the end of the eighteenth century, did not encourage much traffic except over well-defined routes. These geographical features prevented too much intermingling without completely barring homogeneity; they created kaleidoscopic variety without preventing general uniformity. Even today the Hindus of one region can communicate with the Hindus of another region in the subcontinent only through the medium of English or Urdu.

It is not geography alone which has brought about these differences. Many racial groups make up the population; in certain areas they have intermingled; in other areas they have kept themselves distinct. The aboriginal inhabitants have been absorbed almost everywhere; only in some mountainous regions they are still distinct. The Mongolians have intermingled with the populations in the Northern mountains, as well as in Assam and Bengal. The South is almost solidly Dravidian; in Bengal the Dravidian element is strong; it is present within a few miles of the outskirts of Delhi; in West Pakistan, the Aryan group predominates with a sprinkling of Scythian stock. The Dravidians have given the south its languages; their contribution in the realm of ideas to the entire subcontinent is now considered to have been very significant, although it has never been accurately assessed. It is now recognized that the Dravidians were a civilized and seafaring people; they built well planned cities in which civic amenities like drainage, water supply

and good streets were available; they had commercial relations with other countries; some elements of the post-Vedic religion can be traced back to them. The Aryans, when they entered the subcontinent, were not so civilized; they seem to have learned much from the people whom they subjugated. The variety and complexity of Hindu thought may well be, as is claimed by some modern scholars, a Dravidian contribution. It has been suggested that the traditionally dark skinned Krishna, the reputed author of the famous *Bhagavad-gita*, the preceptor of the hero, Arjuna, and now worshipped as an incarnation of God, is the personification of the wisdom of the dark Dravidian guiding the strong arm of the light skinned Aryan hero. Each race has contributed to this medley of superstition, mythology and philosophy, and because the discipline imposed by a logical and well-defined creed was not present, it was difficult to eliminate contradictions; although of course, the forces working for the creation of homogeneity did tend to create some harmony.

By the time Islam first came into contact with India, a good many developments had already taken place. The Indian's contempt for the *Yavana* had not prevented him from accepting Greek influence in several fields. Buddhism had overrun the subcontinent, had degenerated and was dying out. Jainism, less prevalent than Buddhism, was losing its adherents under the impact of a revived and aggressive Brahminism, but it was able to resist complete destruction or degeneration. After its complete victory in the North, Brahminism had turned its attention to the South, where it was fighting great battles with Jainism and occasionally with remnants of Buddhism. It had already gained a dominant position by entrenching itself politically. The Arabs had trade settlements on both the coasts; before the birth of the Prophet, they were themselves pagans and idolatrous and had little interest in the great

religious controversies which were raging around them. However, the Prophet's teachings infused a new life into them, and awakened them into a consciousness of religious truth. They were placed in a fortunate position in India. They were too small numerically to arouse any misgivings; politically, individual Arabs did sometimes rise to positions of eminence and power, but as a community, they were negligible. They lived in affluence being fabulously rich and had excellent contacts. The Hindus, as has been noted, had now tabooed the crossing of the sea for themselves, and the Arabs practically held the monopoly of trade in the Indian Ocean, and were esteemed as the carriers of foreign trade. The Arabs brought wealth; India having forests near the shores could build boats and ships for this trade; Indian commodities were needed in many countries, and the Arabs took them to Arabia and the African east coast on the one side and Malaya, the Eastern Archipelago and China on the other. They brought curiosities, gold, silver and diamonds, and other articles in return for the surplus produce of India. There was nothing but good will for the Arabs. Their conversion must have been noticed, but this could not have made any difference in the friendly relations.

At this time religious debates were an important feature of life in South India; since Brahminism was adding coercion and even massacre to its methods of conversion, religion could not be a matter of indifference; a change in the religion of the Arabs must, therefore, have aroused curiosity. It is almost certain that Muslim ideas began to penetrate Southern Hinduism. Some Saivite sects seem to have come very much under this influence; even the teachings of the great Hindu thinker and religious teacher, Sankaracharya, who found Hindu thought disorganized and chaotic and left it orderly and defined, and whose teachings moulded

Hinduism into a philosophical pattern, bear strong traces of Islamic thinking. Thus Islam influenced Hinduism at one of its most formative periods.

Muslim arms clashed with a Hindu dynasty in the subcontinent at the beginning of the eighth century of the Christian era. The Arabs were fully conscious of the importance of their trade in other countries. The Indian settlements and the trade between the African coast and the Far East could subsist only if friendly relations with the countries where Arabs operated were not jeopardised. Among these countries, Ceylon had an importance of its own, because it was situated midway between the Eastern and Western coasts of India and also because of its situation in the Indian ocean. The Arab government, therefore, cultivated good relations with the ruler of Ceylon who reciprocated. A ship carrying gifts from him to the Caliph, and, as some authorities say, to Hajjaj, the governor of Iraq, was seized by some pirates near Thatta. They had continuously molested Arab shipping and the ruler of Sind was either unwilling or unable to curb the activities of the pirates despite grave protests. Arab patience was exhausted and an armed conflict was the result. Mu'ammad bin Qasim who was entrusted with the campaign executed it brilliantly and added Sind, which then covered more than the Pakistani region of the same name, to the Muslim Empire. This conquest created a fundamental problem for the Muslims regarding the status of the Hindus and Buddhists. A liberal interpretation was accepted and the people of Sind were given the status of *zimmi*s, or an allied and protected people. They were free to follow their own religion; their personal law was recognized and left in their own hands to administer; they were employed by the government; and the department of the administration of revenue was manned by them, which created the influential class of the well-known

'amils, a caste of the Sindhi Hindus. These measures are important because they provided the pattern for later Muslim rulers.

Some Hindu historians have exaggerated the cultural importance of this conquest. They seem to think that it was by coming into contact with Hindu learning in Sind that the Arabs were civilized. This view, however, exaggerates Hindu influences in Arab civilization. The Arabs were more indebted to the Greek, Roman and Byzantine traditions than to the learning of the Hindus, whose contribution was very limited. Even in astronomy, in which the Hindus were strong, the Muslims absorbed Greek traditions rather than Hindu; Muslim philosophy, medicine, mathematics, sciences and even fundamentals of political thought leaned strongly upon the teachings of Greek masters; though, of course, the Muslims were by no means averse to learning from any one who was capable of teaching. In all probability the Arabs learned the Arab system of notation from the Hindus. The conquest of Sind was not the only agent which brought the Arab and Hindu together; Arab contacts with India were older; even in Sind, Arabs were living before the conquest. From the point of view of the history of Islam the importance of the conquest of Sind lies in the fact that it was here that a pattern of Muslim rule in the subcontinent first came into existence. Also, because the mass of the population was Buddhist and disliked the tyranny of Hindu rule, the Arabs found it easier to reconcile them to their regime. The political power of the Muslims saw fluctuations in Sind, but there is no record of a Hindu or Buddhist rebellion, which is a remarkable testimony to the success of the Arabs in making their rule acceptable. Another testimony is that the majority of the population was gradually converted to Islam.

The conquest of Sind took place in the earlier part of the eighth century of the Christian era. The Muslim

rulers of Sind carried their arms several times into the interior of the subcontinent, but these conquests were not permanent. Sind proper, however, continued to remain under Muslim rule. The next stimulus came from a different direction. Subuktigin of Ghaznin came into conflict with his Hindu neighbour, Jaipal. Mahmud, Subuktigin's son, upon his accession, inherited the conflict. He prosecuted the war with great vigour and succeeded in bringing the Punjab under his rule. His policy seems to have been to annex the Punjab and to establish satellite states around his new dominions. He discovered the weakness of the Hindu kingdoms and led many an expedition against several of them, because this brought him great prestige and wealth. He has been accused of being a mere plunderer and not being interested in building up an empire, but this opinion is based upon a misconception. His father's aim was to save his own dominions from the attacks of the Hindu-Shahi dynasty; this endeavour provoked a mortal struggle; Mahmud had to absorb Hindu-Shahi territories into his own dominions which he was extending to the west as well; the consolidation of such an empire needed time and the annexation of territories beyond the Punjab would have delayed its proper integration; the history of Sind had shown that a successful expedition did not provide permanent results. Mahmud, therefore, wisely annexed and consolidated the Punjab and limited himself to creating a wholesome fear for his arms in the hearts of the surrounding Hindu monarchs. In this task he succeeded admirably, because the Punjab, henceforth, became a permanent part of the Muslim world; even when his descendants lost Ghaznin, Lahore continued to be a Ghaznawid possession.

The integration of the major part of West Pakistan into the Islamic world was thus achieved by the beginning of the eleventh century. Lahore soon became one of the famous Muslim capitals of the world. The cultural

traditions of Ghaznin were to some extent revived at Lahore and its poets like Abul Faraj Runi and Salman Sawaji rank with the great masters of Persian poetry. A significant feature of the new literary activity was the cultivation of Hindi by the litterateurs of the court. This, perhaps quite unconsciously, laid the foundation of a new culture and also a new nation; because it is the absorption of indigenous influences which has moulded the Muslims of the subcontinent into a distinct cultural group and a Nation.

The next expansion of Muslim power took place two centuries later in the thirteenth century. Mu'izz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam who took Lahore from the weak hands of the last Ghaznawid, Qutb-ud-din Aibak, brought a considerable part of Northern India under his control. It was this phase of the expansion of the Muslim empire in the subcontinent which brought Bengal within the political control of Islam. Muhammad bin Bakhtyar Khalji achieved this success with a mere handful of eighteen Muslim cavalrymen. The Hindu ruler thought that this must be the advance guard of a large Muslim army and escaped from his palace. Such, by now, was the reputation of the invincibility of Muslim arms that Hindu morale was completely shattered.

While Muslim armies were having this success in Northern India, a storm was brewing, which brought ruin and disaster to the eastern world of Islam. The Mongol hordes of Chingiz Khan, without warning to the outside world, discovered the weakness of the civilized world around them and their own capacity to overthrow it. Recent research has unravelled the causes of this strength, specially the organizing capacity of Chingiz Khan and his undoubted military ability, without which, of course, he could not have achieved such resounding victories. It is true that most of the Muslim states were degenerate and weak, yet the magnitude of the

Mongol successes was very great. Only recently a new region, Northern India, had been conquered, which proves that vigour had not completely drained off Muslim veins. Chingiz Khan, in spite of his greatness as a conqueror, was not chivalrous. He and his hordes followed no principles of honour or morality in dealing with their enemies; they were cruel, they respected neither age nor disability in their lust for bloodshed; it was immaterial whether a foe had fought up to the last or had asked for and been promised quarter; combatants and non-combatants were slaughtered without distinction; the invasion of a Mongol army was like the fury of the elements, blind in its destruction. The Mongols were filthy in their habits, indifferent even to the cleanliness of food which they ate; they lacked refinement and graciousness and cared little for a promise. If the accounts, left by the victims of the Mongol invasions in Asia and Europe, had not tallied even in detail, they would have been considered to be highly exaggerated. It was such a foe, neither understanding nor caring for the softer graces of life, who destroyed what painstaking Muslim efforts had built up in the course of centuries. Many a building was destroyed, many a library was lost, many an art treasure was plundered and destroyed. It was not the defeat of a people; it was the destruction of a civilization. Complete populations were wiped out; systems of irrigation, which the Muslims had built up to quench the thirst of the dry land, were destroyed. The economy of a vast area was shattered and permanently injured; learning and culture yielded place to ignorance and barbarism; in short, such a blow was dealt to the Muslim east that it was left prostrate and crippled. The Mongols inflicted a wound from which the Muslim world recovered only slowly and partially.

The Sultans of Delhi were able to withstand the storm. Several times the Mongol armies reached the

outskirts of Delhi, and the pressure on the north-western frontier was continuous. This involved constant vigilance; the Muslim community could not permit weaklings in positions of authority; rebellion or contumacy could not be tolerated; and this explains the succession of brilliant men to the throne who sustained the Empire in the days of danger. In an indirect manner, the Mongols contributed to the development of Indo-Muslim culture. Scholars, engineers, architects and craftsmen, driven out by Mongol cruelty, sought shelter in Delhi and other cities. The former, because of the patronage of the court, however, was the greatest beneficiary. As early as the reign of Balban, these *refugees* populated several quarters and converted Delhi into one of the most cultured and brilliant cities in the East.

The example of Delhi was followed at other provincial centres, which also encouraged the cultivation of the regional languages. Bengali literature, for instance, came into existence under the patronage of the Muslim rulers. Even at Delhi, an interest was taken in the local language, Hindwi or Hindi. The famous Amir Khusrau, who ranks among the greatest Persian poets, has used a fair number of Hindi words in his Persian poems, and, in addition, he wrote Hindi verse. Later this fashion became more popular, and the Muslim poets Malik Muhammad Jaisi, Kabir and 'Abd-ur-Rahim Khan-khanan were some of the brightest stars in the firmament of Hindi poetry. The Hindus, realizing that some knowledge of Persian was useful to obtain government posts soon started learning it and, by the time of Sikandar Lodi, they had taken to Persian in large numbers. It was this familiarity with Persian among the Hindus which led Akbar to abolish the system of dual book-keeping—one in Persian and the other in Hindi—at the *pargana* headquarters and to maintain accounts in Persian alone. The Hindus, in

the course of time, produced historians, prose writers and poets of repute in Persian.

The interest taken by the Muslims in Hindi literature and the popularity of Persian among the Hindus accelerated the development of a common language, Urdu, which, as its name implies, had already existed as the *lingua franca* of the camps. Its recognition as a polite language, of course, came later. Urdu, very often referred to as Hindwi or Hindi in the histories, because of its basic Hindi grammar, was to the mind of the earlier Muslims, merely Hindi written in the Arabic script. There seemed nothing peculiar in the adoption of the Arabic script, since several Indian languages like Bengali and even Tamil and Telugu were written in that script by the Muslims. With a greater intermingling of culture, more and more words of Arabic, Persian or Turkish origin entered the language, and, in the course of time, Urdu became different from Hindi, not only in script but also in texture. The vocabulary and idiom were now different, its use as a vehicle of poetic thought by Muslims and Hindus educated in the Islamic tradition gave it not only a Persian prosody but also the spirit of Persian poetry. The soul of Urdu poetry remained Muslim and different from the soul of Hindi poetry. However, not only in the days of Muslim rule but even during British domination until towards the very end, the number of Hindus writing Urdu poetry was quite large. The development of Urdu, more than anything else, epitomized the cultural fusion between the Hindus and the Muslims, and its rejection by the Hindus a breaking away from a common heritage.

The creed of Islam was simple and rational; it demanded complete and unambiguous belief. Islam was as insistent upon belief as Hinduism was indifferent to it. Islam had a body of social laws, a pattern of morality and a code of behaviour, and these were

different from similar Hindu institutions. Islam believed in the equality of man; this idea is completely opposed to the Hindu concept of society divided into so many castes. Islam does not suffer from any xenophobia; differences in race and colour are considered to be but accidental and are given no importance; in Hinduism they are important, because caste was devised to protect *varna*, colour, the pride of the Aryan, throughout the ages. Face to face, the two religions were bound to come into conflict. They had different weapons for waging a battle. Islam had its positive creed, a rational approach towards life, and a democratic organization to appeal to the persecuted and also to the sense of justice lying dormant in the persecutor. It succeeded most where persecution was the greatest; the Buddhist population of the Indus River Valley was persecuted by Brahminism for clinging to its faith and it turned gratefully to Islam as its saviour and later accepted the new faith. Similarly in Bengal, the mass of the people were Buddhists who had been persecuted by the Hindus. They sang gleefully of their wrongs having been avenged by Muhammad. This attitude of gratitude soon turned into an admiration for the new religion and Bengal also became a stronghold of Islam. The missionaries of Islam attacked Hinduism with merciless polemics, directed against the irrational superstitions of the lower strata of Hindu belief which went little further than frank animism or idolatry, against the amoral and sometimes fantastic mythology which had the sanction of belief and also against the social injustice inherent in the caste system.

In the beginning Hinduism was taken by surprise but it was by no means without defence. It had seen the emergence of militant faiths from its own bosom of which Buddhism and Jainism are the most important. Buddhism was almost eliminated from the lands of Hinduism, by a process of continuous corrosion. At first Buddhism

had softened towards Hinduism, recognizing it as of some validity; then *Hinayana*, the purer form, yielded to the *Mahayana*, which had absorbed so much Hinduism that the obstacles to its absorption into Hinduism were removed; it then sank into sheer debased superstition, and was finally destroyed, partly by preaching and partly by persecution. Jainism showed greater vitality; it had to be subdued by persecution; ultimately it won amnesty by consenting to live as a sect among the Hindus, accepting the Hindu social system, but maintaining most of its own doctrines. Lesser creeds and intruders from outside were assimilated or at least fully acclimatized. In Islam, however, there was a different kind of adversary. Buddhism and Jainism both had accepted the fundamental Hindu philosophy of *karma*, or the transmigration of the soul, the cycle of birth and rebirth and the new life being ordained in the content of its happiness and sorrow by previous actions. In fact, like Hinduism they were concerned with the problem of birth and rebirth. This was all common ground with Hinduism; they spoke, to some extent, the same language. The minor creeds which were absorbed were sometimes at an even lower stage of development than the less developed forms of Hinduism. Islam, however, was concerned more with God and His relationship with man; it was as a corollary of this that it dealt with the relationship between man and man. Its insistence upon pure monotheism had an appeal for those who wished to think rationally; in its advocacy of the equality of man and in its democratic organization and social system, there was attraction for the intellectual as well as the downtrodden.

Hinduism had developed three "paths" for attaining salvation, which, according to the basic Indian philosophy, was to obtain freedom from birth and rebirth. The first was *karma-marga*, or the path of action; according to the advocates of this path, right action

was the basis of salvation. In a way this philosophy was hedonistic, because the aim of religion was defined as freedom from pain—the result of wrong action. It was thus argued that right action was the surest way to escape pain. In actual practice, right action was identified mostly with ritual, sacrifice and following the social code. A person born in a low caste must carry out the duties enjoined by his status; his inferior status was the result of his deeds in his previous life and any effort to change the conditions of life in his status would only worsen his prospects in the next incarnation. The second was *gnana-marga*, or the path of knowledge, whose advocates believed that knowledge provided the real way to salvation. The third was the *bhakti-marga* or the path of devotion, according to which school, devotion to God would earn salvation. The three schools did not differ greatly in their fundamental beliefs, philosophy, or concept of society. The strongest and the most popular was the school which believed in the path of action. Some eminent Hindu scholars are of the opinion that the *karma-marga* was mainly Aryan in origin and that the *bhakti-marga* was derived from Dravidian ideas which later consolidated into a school. The school believing in the path of devotion was the weakest and the least popular, but in this Hinduism discovered an answer to Islam.

The *sufis* were the main missionaries of Islam, and they believed in loving God with their entire self, to them a consuming love for God was the essence of religion and man's highest achievement. Hinduism developed a school which accepted this thesis. A number of saintly preachers grew up in the fold of Hinduism, who called themselves "*bhaktas*" or devotees of God. The *bhaktas* rejected polytheism, preached monotheism and considered the love of God as the highest virtue. They did not set much store by caste, and some even rejected it. They considered the exoteric ritual, which was of such great

importance to the followers of *karma-marga*, as futile and meaningless and laid great stress upon the cultivation of purity of heart, nobility of soul and devotion to God. As they rejected exoteric ritual, they did not have much use for religious differences. They propounded the equality of all religions, which were merely different paths leading to the same goal of God-consciousness; what really mattered was the cultivation of the love of God and not belonging to any particular religion. These convictions, honestly held and preached with sincerity, had great appeal. This movement brought great tolerance and understanding. Among the Hindus it had two branches: one inclining very much in its outlook towards Islam, and sometimes hardly distinguishable from it, the other more Hindu in its outlook, accepting the spirit of devotion, but maintaining orthodox Hindu doctrines. The best example of the first was Kabir and of the other Tulsi Das, the author of *Ramayana* in Hindi verse, which has been the bible of North Indian Hinduism for several centuries.

The branch which inclined towards Islam was also its complete answer; by accepting its doctrine, but not its authority, it prevented conversion. All the weapons in the armoury of Islam were commandeered; its moral and spiritual domain was thus expanded but, at the same time, its physical expansion was stopped. If all religions are but different paths leading to a single goal, it is the goal which matters, not the paths. If all religions are equally good, conversion is meaningless, for there is but one conversion necessary, the conversion of the soul. Today, when the influence of Islam on Hinduism has worn off or will not be readily accepted as such, it is possible to see the fallacy in this attitude, but in those days such arguments seemed more than plausible. It was not only among non-Muslims that this philosophy found adherents; even the faithful were attracted to it, the most



notable example being Akbar. Heterodoxy invaded the stronghold of Islam; the court, the nobles, the masses, all were affected. There was consternation in the camp of orthodoxy; instead of winning converts, it was losing its hold over its own flock. The mainstay of orthodoxy is logical and strict adherence to a set of principles. The heterodoxy which now developed was so nebulous, so vague, so diffused, that it was difficult to attack it on any definite point; yet it grew so strong that many a Hindu teacher drew adherents from amongst the Muslims. The converse was also true, but this could be no consolation, because it only added to the general laxity.

However, disconcerting as it was for orthodox Islam to be faced with this, the situation was not without its compensation. A greater understanding was brought about between the Hindus and the Muslims, a better atmosphere was created for the government, and the pace of cultural integration was hastened. What the Muslim rulers had assiduously tried to do was now taken up by men whose word carried a much greater popular appeal. The monarchs and their governors had, purposely and consciously, built bridges to cover the yawning chasms between the rulers and the ruled and these bridges were now being converted into highways by the thronging populace.

Before this, orthodoxy had been attacked from within the citadel of Islam. In the beginning the *Qaramitah* had tried to seize power by a well-planned *coup d'etat* which failed; later, Firuz Shah, being greatly under the influence of the *'ulama*, punished the sect. A greater challenge came from the *Mahdavis*. Sayyid Muhammad, a pious scholar of Jaunpur, brooded upon the laxity which had crept into Muslim society to such an extent that he imagined that he heard a voice telling him that he was the promised *Mahdi* to restore the pristine glory of Islam. He preached strict adherence to

the code of Islam, and established an order of preachers who lived an austere life of abstinence, owning no property and sharing with one another their meagre belongings. His views were not at all heterodox; if he had not claimed to be the *Mahdi*, he would have been acclaimed by the orthodox as a great Muslim preacher; but having made this claim, he was branded a heretic. Orthodoxy saw with alarm the growing influence of the new sect. Under Sultan Islam Shah Sur, the '*ulama* clamoured so much that two eminent *Mahdawi* leaders, Shaikh 'Alai and Shaikh 'Abdullah Niyazi, had to be publicly punished. The former, already emaciated by his asceticism and long journeys, was physically too unwell to receive any punishment, and succumbed when the flogging had only begun. The latter, left unconscious but unrepentant, subsequently recanted of his own accord when he was told by a reliable witness that Sayyid Muhammad acknowledged his error as he was dying without having accomplished the complete rejuvenation of Islam. Orthodoxy battled against *Mahdawism* for long with ineffective weapons. Being entrenched in political power, it used the might of the state to crush a conviction and failed. Selfish '*ulama* sometimes used it to ruin their rivals. Shaikh Mubarak who was certainly tainted with the heresy was one of those who suffered. In Akbar's reign, many streams met and formed a roaring river. Shi'ahs from Iran, *Mahdawis* who did not proclaim their doctrine, yet who, disliked the orthodox '*ulama* and their leaders, heterodox *sufis*, Hindus, *bhaktas*, Jesuits, Zoroastrians, Jains and others created a curious atmosphere, which was bizarre yet unfavourable to orthodoxy, which for a while suffered because it did not produce leaders as brilliant and as capable as its opponents like Abu-'l Fazl, Hakim Abu-'l Fath and others.

The opponents, however, went too far; they began to question the fundamentals of Islam, and thus

brought about a reaction. In Jahangir's reign, Shaikh Ahmad of Sarhind, commonly known as *Mujaddid-i-alf-i-thani* came to the forefront. By constant efforts he brought about a revival. The political effects of this change can be seen in the differing atmospheres of the courts of Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzib 'Alamgir. Akbar was the culmination of the success of heterodoxy; Jahangir's accession marked its decline; Shah Jahan, pious and orthodox, did not tolerate laxity in the court but, at the same time, kept the non-orthodox contented; 'Alamgir was the symbol of the victory of orthodoxy.

The reaction was natural, because too much laxity had weakened Islam. It should be remembered that the political power of Islam in the subcontinent was based on the spiritual strength and discipline of the Muslims. So long as the Empire was ostensibly Muslim and commanded the fullest loyalty of its Muslim subjects, it was safe. Under Akbar, this loyalty had been shaken; previous rulers had treated non-Muslims with consideration, tolerance and benevolence and had advanced Hindus and other non-Muslims to positions of eminence and responsibility, but the core of power had always been in Muslim hands. This was changed in the days of Akbar. At the beginning the poet could sing with satisfaction at the sight of "the Hindu wielding the sword of Islam"; but soon the Muslims began to lose their special loyalty for the Empire. A polity, to be successful, must either be based upon the willing co-operation of the majority, or should command the deepest loyalty of a powerful group. The Mughul Empire failed to achieve either. It was never looked upon as their own state by the Hindus; when Man Singh and others like him served it with loyalty and enthusiasm, they were certainly not admired by their co-religionists, whose sympathies were, most often, with such Hindu chieftains as defied the

imperial authority. It is true that several Hindu historians have written from the Muslim point of view and sometimes even used epithets for the rebels which would normally be used by Muslims; it is also true that peasants and traders wanted peace and protection more than anything else and disliked disturbance and anarchy; but in those days the politically active and conscious classes were the chieftains and their warriors, who sided with authority only so long as it was convenient. There was no burning enthusiasm for serving the Empire among the Hindus, most of whom admired its tolerance, impartiality and determination to protect the weak from the tyranny of the strong.

In the earlier days the Muslims had this enthusiasm; whoever might be on the throne, it was a Muslim Empire; but this feeling, so assiduously promoted by the Sultans, was all but destroyed by Akbar. It was further weakened by divisions based upon sects and countries of origin, and the Turanis and the Iranis became almost irreconcilable. To think of nationalism in those days would be a grave anachronism; there could be no cementing agent for the polity of the Mughuls, but that of religion; this alone could bind the Muslims and, in spite of obvious disadvantages and difficulties, religion could produce at least one group to fight for the Empire. Under the sultans this group had shown its ability to defend the state from powerful foes as well as internal rebellion; only when that group could no longer hold together, did the state suffer. Now there were two difficulties. The Muslims had lost their enthusiasm because their morale had been undermined; how could they think that the state needed their enthusiastic support if the state itself was not strongly identified with Islam? In addition, laxity had dimmed their vision of the fact that Islam, to be able to live in a Hindu land must be on its guard all the time. The danger to the political power of Islam became

obvious enough when the Hindu rebellions headed by the Rajputs and the Marathas started, but the danger to the religious aspect of the Faith was not so apparent to the contemporaries.

The margin between tolerance and apathy is always thin for the average man; real indifference can be created by a continuous propaganda in favour of the doctrine that all religions are the same. The Hindu environment is especially dangerous for a faith whose followers succumb to indifference because it has such a capacity for absorbing seemingly contradictory doctrines and then gradually bringing about a harmony among the absorbed beliefs by influencing them strongly with its own outlook and principles. Its efforts have sometimes been conscious, as the demand of Hindu extremists in the third decade of this century that Indian Muslims should adopt Hindu names and customs and call themselves Muhammadi Hindus; sometimes they take the shape of a sub-conscious reflex action, such as the *bhakti* movement. The latter is always more dangerous, because it is instinctive, subtle and deep, but as efficacious in its results as the silent, descending growth of root columns from the ever spreading branches of an old banyan tree.

The corroding influence of laxity, the effect of the policies of Akbar, and the deviations from the principles of Islam which had resulted in the lack of enthusiasm were familiar to the mind of the *Mujaddid*. He tried to remedy all this, and to a large extent succeeded. Unfortunately he had to adopt the orthodox point of view and thus came into conflict with the Shi'ahs. He could not avoid this hurdle, because Shi'ah influence at the court of Akbar had increased the atmosphere of laxity and heterodoxy. The attitude of the Shi'ahs was natural, since orthodoxy was fighting the battle against all dissenters. Unless orthodoxy succeeded in enlisting

the court as the upholder of its doctrine, it could not oust heterodoxy or laxity. If the court became the upholder of orthodoxy, Shi'ah influence would suffer. Hence the Shi'ahs allied themselves with the forces arrayed against orthodoxy. The *Mujaddid's* movement, however, was not principally directed against them; they came only within the range of its attacks. The main target was that school of *sufism* which by believing in monism (*wahdat-ul-wujud*) seemed, in popular mind, to support the claim of the ultimate unity of all religions—a thesis which, as has been pointed out, was the main weapon in the armoury of Hinduism against Islam. The *Mujaddid's* letters show that, apart from his warfare against doctrinal laxity, he had a positive political programme. This was the restoration of such institutions as had been abolished or fallen into disuse; the foremost of these was *jizyah*. It was this programme which was actively taken up by 'Alamgir.

This monarch has been the target of much abuse by Hindu and British writers. He has been painted as a narrow-minded bigot who brought the noble edifice of the Mughul Empire down by persecuting Hindus. Shah Jahan, orthodox and pious in his private life, had initiated a more positively Islamic policy than that of his father, but he kept clear of any measures which would annoy any powerful elements in the political life of his Empire. His partiality for Dara Shukoh neutralized his personal orthodoxy in the eyes of the opponents as well as the swing towards it in his public policy. When the conflict for the throne started, Dara Shukoh was supported by the Rajputs and others who viewed the rise of orthodoxy with distaste. When 'Alamgir emerged victorious, he, through his temperament and the pressure of his supporters, was obliged to pursue a policy favouring orthodoxy. He made efforts to win over the other groups but he did not succeed. In addition the issues were by now too well-defined to be shirked. 'Alamgir

has been accused of driving the Rajputs into rebellion and of strengthening the Marathas by destroying the sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda. The Rajputs had been disappointed at the defeat of Dara Shukoh, but their rebellions can be traced to specific non-religious grievances or motives of a personal, tribal or political nature. It is true that Dara Shukoh or a prince with less orthodox leanings would have faced less opposition and perhaps rallied greater support; but this is different from saying that 'Alamgir's alleged persecution of the Hindus drove them into rebellion.

Religious motives have been attributed to 'Alamgir for destroying the Shi'ah sultanates of the Deccan; it is interesting to note that similar motives are attributed to Shah Jahan. The originator of an expansionist policy towards the south, Akbar has been spared this charge because in his case the charge would sound absurd. The proof of Shah Jahan's religious motive is sought in his insistence that the coinage of Golconda should bear no Shi'ah formula; but it is obvious that when he insisted that his name should appear on the coinage as the most easily recognized emblem of his suzerainty, he could not, without evil consequences elsewhere, permit a Shi'ah formula to be coupled with his name. The introduction of his name in the *khutbah* was another symbol, made even more necessary, because the name of the Safawi monarchs of Iran had been mentioned before. This also necessitated the removal of any palpable anti-Sunni references from the *khutbah*, but no other encroachment was made on the domain of Shi'ism in the Deccan by Shah Jahan. By the time of 'Alamgir's intervention, no choice was left. The sultanates had embarked upon such a rapid course of decay and disintegration that they were past all bolstering. In Golconda the real power was in the hands of Hindu ministers, in Bijapur there was chaos. Anarchy, which had raised its head in the shape of

Maratha revolt and depredations, had prostrated the government. The two sultanates had neither the will nor the means of suppressing the Maratha vultures. 'Alamgir could not ignore the Maratha danger; depredations had been made into his domains, but the danger was greater. Anarchy has an insidious way of spreading; it ignores frontiers if the population on either side is homogenous, and the envelopment of the Deccan in anarchy portended no good to the entire subcontinent. Indeed, the Marathas let loose forces which they were not able to control. The anarchy which they nourished ultimately covered the whole of the subcontinent; it abated only when the people were tired and weakened to such an extent that they co-operated with the disciplined forces created by the British who gradually brought the area under their firm rule.

Faced with the grim spectre of anarchy or with the rise, at best, of a hostile power next door, 'Alamgir had to act in sheer self-defence. He could see the position clearly. The issues would be clouded, the Maratha revolt would have a sentimental appeal for other Hindus, especially when they used slogans for *Hindu-pad-padshahi* (a Hindu empire) and the ousting of the killers of the sacred animal, the cow. The worsening of relations, because of Qandahar, with Iran and the war against the Shi'ah sultanates of the Deccan would alienate Shi'ah feelings. One has only to read the *Waqai'* by Ni'mat Khan-i-'Ali with its smooth abuse of the Emperor to gauge Shi'ah sympathies. The official proclamations were grandiloquent and strained to maintain the prestige of imperial arms, and they could not convey a full sense of danger to the Shi'ahs; they could not be told that Islamic dominance itself was fighting a battle of life and death to win them over to the greater cause. In addition the Emperor was continually winning battles which hid the fact that the Muslim power was losing the war. It was a most

exacting, a most difficult and a most delicate task with which 'Alamgir was confronted. He had an indomitable will. Old, weary and sick, he went on fighting; superficially he seemed to win, but he, more than any one else, realized when he permitted himself to be carried to his last resting place at Aurangabad that he had lost.

In his fight for Islam, 'Alamgir could not expect the support of his non-Muslim subjects. Some of the Muslims, carried away by narrow sympathies, did not understand the full significance of the drama which they were witnessing; the rest could not be taken into full confidence regarding the real extent of danger, because the mainstay of the Empire was its prestige. Under the circumstances, 'Alamgir did what he could. He supported orthodoxy, which alone backed his efforts wholeheartedly and he tried to recreate the Islamic feeling which in previous reigns had been so disastrously left to decay. No compromise was possible with the other groups on this question beyond a guarantee of fairplay and justice as well as tolerance. 'Alamgir made it amply clear that his quarrels with Hindu rebels or Shi'ah states would not be permitted to divert him from his duty towards his Hindu and Shi'ah subjects. Again and again in his letters, we come across statements and references to actions which show how scrupulous he was in his dealings with them.

Pious and austere in his private life, he had a high sense of responsibility. To him the Mughul throne was not a bed of roses; he aspired to it in self-defence and because he was discerning enough to see how a variety of forces were gradually sapping the strength of the Muslim heritage in India. Having come to the throne, he diagnosed the dangers correctly, and with a sublime sense of duty, he spared himself no effort or tribulation and fought until the very last, trying to recover the lost ground literally inch

by inch. When the realization of defeat came with the approach of his death, his regret was not for himself, nor for the wasted mountains of strenuous effort, nor for the future of his dynasty, but for the future of Islam in the land. He fought in the face of defeat, hoping for victory, but not for it. He was a true *mujahid*, to whom effort in the cause of his faith is a goal in itself. Too often historians have judged him by criteria which have no relevance; they do not appreciate the grimness of the situation which confronted him, nor the dangers which at that time surrounded Islam in India.

The worst ills of the body politic came to the surface in 'Alamgir's lifetime. The zeal with which Muslim generals had fought against non-Muslims faded; in earlier days we do not hear of any Muslim being bribed by Hindu rebels or princes. When Rana Sanga was aided by Hasan Khan Mewati in his fight against Babur, Hasan was branded as a renegade. Humayun stood aside in his struggle against Bahadur Shah of Gujarat when the latter was besieging a Rajput fortress. Even in the days of the heterodox Akbar, the loyalty of Muslim generals in wars against non-Muslims was never in doubt. Indeed Akbar's Hindu generals and soldiers were credited with 'wielding the sword of Islam.' The Deccan had developed considerable finesse in the art of giving bribes, and these were soon adopted by the Mughuls as an easier method of overcoming the enemy. We read of their use under Akbar and the result was that corruption of the enemy became a recognized method of warfare, of which the necessary outcome was that many Mughul generals themselves were tempted into disloyalty. The harvest was fully reaped by 'Alamgir who inherited not only the Mughul *mansabdars* but also the officers of Bijapur and later of Golconda. In his reign we see the spectacle of a favourite son joining the Rajputs, a top ranking general like Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan in league with the Marathas, and

large sections of the imperial troops behaving merely as mercenaries, willing to fight for the highest bidder or just not caring for whom they were fighting, and, therefore, with no heart in the fight. The entire Mughul force was tainted with corruption, indifference and in certain sections, with disloyalty. Few of the Muslim soldiers were fighting for a cause, they had merely become professional soldiers. The Muslim troops of the Sultans had the feeling of participating in a *jihad*; the Muslim troops of 'Alamgir, too often, looked upon soldiering as a profession, adopted for no end greater than earning a living. The Marathas, a compact group, fought for plunder, and also for *Hindu-pad-padshahi*. They could, therefore, face hardships and endure the rigours of guerilla warfare. Apart from religion the Rajput rebels were, like the Marathas, tied to one another by ties of blood, clan and caste. In addition they knew their terrain and commanded local sympathies. It is surprising, therefore, that the Muslim generals and soldiers were not aroused to a sense of danger. It is even more surprising that 'Alamgir's will and determination could have surmounted these difficulties to the extent of crushing the Rajput rebellion and capturing Shahu. If he had been succeeded by a man of equal determination and vigour, and if Muslim leadership had remained as capable, perhaps the forces of anarchy might have been checked; but with the first impact of modern nationalism, Muslim supremacy would have again been endangered and ultimately could not last. Yet there was no reason why good leadership could not have restored Muslim solidarity and strength of character.

The period after 'Alamgir's death, however, makes sorry reading. Politically the Muslims not only allowed their power to crumble in their hands but they also made little effort to save themselves from being completely overwhelmed. In the face of the grave dangers which had asserted themselves in the shape of the loss of vast

territories and which no longer needed special vision or insight to assess, they failed to unite among themselves. Personal and sectarian differences divided them so much that they could not unite; they went on fighting and intriguing until they could neither save themselves nor Islam. It was not only the Muslims who suffered. The entire subcontinent groaned under the iniquitous methods of the Marathas; if they had established an empire based upon sound principles of government, the populace, mostly Hindu, would have recovered from the injuries inflicted upon it by anarchy. The Marathas, however, took little responsibility in the areas which they devastated. Theirs was a polity based upon plunder. Their hordes would come down upon the peaceful and prosperous countryside and denude it of all that could be carried away or destroyed. They began to rule some areas, but they seldom fully divested themselves of their predatory methods. Their example created other marauders. The *Pindaris* were, like the Mongols, the scourge of God, and the prosperity which had been built up by long years of ordered and benevolent government under the diligent care of the Mughul Emperors was once again destroyed by anarchy and disorder. This period played a considerable part in creating the conditions of chronic poverty of the Indian masses.

The Muslims seem to have given up all hope until Ahmad Shah Abdali appeared on the scene. Then a far-sighted and capable leader, Najib-ud-Daulah, seized the opportunity and rallied some Muslim potentates of Northern India to the support of Abdali who inflicted a crushing defeat on the Marathas. The Marathas never fully recovered from the losses sustained by them at Panipat; their power began to crumble; but even so this victory did not restore the morale or the unity of the Muslims. Ahmad Shah did not consider it worth-while integrating his Muslim

supporters for any constructive effort, and the Muslim lion, licking its wounds after the continuous struggle against the Marathas, had only mustered a last effort, it seemed, to maul its tormentors. It soon succumbed to its own weakness. The new, disciplined and growing power of the British reaped the fruits of Maratha defeat. Some historians have speculated upon the chances of the Mughul Empire being able to survive in the face of western expansion, even if it had not been beset by internal difficulties. Such speculation is useless; the loss of sea power was the greatest blow to Muslim power all over the world. The significance of the entry of the western nations into the seas of the orient was never fully grasped by the Muslims, particularly the Mughuls. But so long as the Mughuls were strong, they were capable of punishing the armed traders who sought the advantages of commerce in their domains. The Mughul Empire existed but in name when the British had their opportunity. The addition of the Indian empire to the resources of the British played no mean part in giving western civilization a great impetus and, in several ways, created traditions of imperialism which looked upon the ancient lands of Asia as legitimate booty.

However, at that time, it was the inner weakness of the Indian Muslims themselves which brought about their downfall. This weakness now expressed itself in many ways. The sense of values began to crumble, and Muslim society lost its sources of inspiration. Selfishness, instead of devotion to a cause, ruled the conduct of men; superstition, instead of true religion, became the substance of belief; daydreaming and wishful thinking took the place of action; and even purity of doctrine was polluted by the mingling of local custom. Learned theologians kept clear of these pitfalls, but the mass of the Muslim people could not.

The *Mujaddid's* teachings had not fully percolated down to the masses. They were demoralized and dispirited. Even among the theologians there were only a few clearheaded thinkers who tried to save the situation, and the odds were too heavy. The collapse of the Mughul Empire was but a symbol of the moral collapse of the Indian Muslims. Of course, the responsibility for this decadence lay with those who had provided the environment so favourable to the growth of indifference.

The growth of the Muslim polity in overwhelmingly Muslim lands had been of such a pattern as not to encourage an active interest in politics. The democratic spirit of Islam sought its fullest expression in its social life but after the days of the Republic under the first four caliphs, the Islamic polity had ceased to be democratic in spirit. The legal form of election had been reduced to a mere formality, and no political institutions were built up to keep the people interested in public affairs. The legal system built upon the just, sound and democratic principles of Islam had given such protection to the citizen, and the administrative institutions had been developed with such ability and benevolence that no tyranny of an unbearably harsh nature irritated the people into devising agencies of democratic control. Democracy in the West was the foster child of selfish feudalism and its harsh, unimaginative and cruel code of usage and law. In Muslim countries, bureaucratic good government lulled the people into sleep. Dynastic wars or struggles for political control left the people untouched, the occasional ripples of warfare did not disturb the even and steady flow of the current underneath, the departments of justice and *hisbah* (which was responsible for social welfare) were generally in the hands of pious and learned theologians who had little to do with politics and political

upheavals. The administration of police, revenue and local affairs was disturbed only if the area was directly affected by war, otherwise the officials went on performing their functions, waiting to see whether they had to render account to the old masters or some new authority. In days of peace, even these factors did not exist to create any hardship for the average citizen. His emotions might be involved if he had any interest in a conflict, but often this also was remote or non-existent. Mostly a conflict implied nothing to the people; if there was a holocaust like the Mongol invasion, when suffering was great and terrible, it was of a nature which kills rather than encourages political activity. On the whole life was easy and smooth and if there were anxieties, they were personal. When, for various reasons, society began to decay in these countries, there was no immediate sense of danger. It was a long, slow and almost imperceptible process.

In India, however, the existence of the Muslims was threatened by rebellious forces as well as by the slow and imperceptible influence of Hinduism. In other Muslim lands the foe was inside the spirit of the people and the society; in India, it was both inside and outside. Indian Muslims have been always exposed to external dangers, and thus their instinct of self-preservation has been strong. They had a system geared for defence as well as conquest, which resisted successfully the Mongol inroads. It was the consciousness of internal danger which again and again inspired the formation of strong, well-administered Muslim empires in the subcontinent. But Akbar's policy had considerably weakened, almost eliminated, this feeling because if the Hindu "wielded the sword of Islam", any sense of danger from Hindu insurrection was discounted. When the day of reckoning came, and the Hindus fought for *Hindu-pad-padshahi*, the Muslims were no longer awake to their danger; besides, the Hindu

rebellion and the collapse of the Empire were disguised. When Sindhia was installed as deputy vicegerent of the Emperor of Delhi, there was no substance of authority in the hands of Shah 'Alam, yet, ostensibly, Sindhia was "the Emperor's son and servant." Officers of the East India Company signed public documents as "the servants" of the Mughul Emperor who was mentioned by name. Up to 1857, the East India Company, having already discarded any semblance of acting in the Emperor's name in the higher branches of administration, allowed the myth to be perpetuated in local matters. Even in the first decade of the twentieth century, in the interior of the country, the public crier, when making a public announcement would preface it by announcing: "the world belongs to God, the country to the *Padshah*, and the administration to the *Company Bahadur*". The Marathas, in particular, kept up the fiction of Mughul sovereignty in large areas. Where they established their rule, they continued to maintain the Muslim courts and Muslim personal law. When some theologians were asked to give a ruling on the legality of the Muslim acceptance of Maratha rule, they said that in view of the Maratha acceptance of Muslim sovereignty and their maintenance of Muslim courts and Muslim personal law, there was no legal difficulty in Muslim acquiescence in Maratha rule. How, in the face of such rulings, could the average Muslim citizen distinguish between a Man Singh and a Sindhia? Without proper and united leadership, the Muslims, in many instances, would not know that the war against the Maratha fought to preserve the authority of Islam was *jihad*, and not merely an internecine struggle between officers of different faiths, especially when owing to the weakening of the central authority these officers were so given to fighting.

These arguments should not be taken to imply that non-Muslims should not have been permitted to share the

responsibilities of government, but it was a crime to lull the Muslims into believing that the maintenance of the Empire was not their primary responsibility. Even more disastrous was the encouragement of the feeling that tolerance implied the belief that all religions were merely different paths, all equally good, of reaching the same God. This was an even more potent cause of the demoralization and degeneration of the Muslims, especially of their acceptance of subtle non-Islamic ideas. Indeed this was the darkest period in the history of Indian Islam.

And yet, Islam had sufficient resilience to save itself from complete destruction in India. Its misfortunes produced thinkers who analysed the causes of its downfall and set about finding the remedies. Of these, the greatest was Shah Waliullah. Deeply imbued with the spirit of Islam and well-versed in Islamic learning, he was a keen observer, a deep thinker and an accomplished philosopher. He diagnosed the ills from which Islam in the subcontinent was suffering and suggested remedies; nothing which was relevant escaped his notice; religion, economics, sociology, all were grist to the mill of his philosophy. It was realized by him that it was essential for the Muslims to correct their thinking if they were to be rescued from utter destruction and absorption in the surrounding Hindu environment. The reform of a society so degenerate could not be achieved in a day. It took several generations to wean the Muslims from many habits of erroneous thinking; but the process once begun progressed steadily.

In the meanwhile a new power had been growing. The British were fast becoming the paramount power in India; they had the vision to follow certain consistent policies. In spite of their rapid decay, the Muslims were still not beneath notice. Like the pools of water left in depressions by the ebbing tide, there had been left Muslim potentates and estates. Muslim

endowments for education were still intact. The memory of an imperial past had not died; indeed, now that the Empire had been lost and reformers were busy inculcating a consciousness of this loss, this memory was preserved with pride. In all these symptoms the British saw danger. The Marathas, except in their homeland, the Maharashtra, had failed to achieve popularity; in their plunder and exactions, they had been impartial; Hindus and Muslims alike were their victims. Other Hindus had lost the tradition of ruling the land except the Rajputs, who could seldom unite and could not create an Empire. The insurrections of communities like the Jats were comparatively local affairs. The Sikhs, too few to be a danger for British power in the whole subcontinent, were first contained in the Punjab and later defeated and tamed. The Muslims were still potentially dangerous. The British, therefore, adopted policies which varied from time to time, but which had a uniform core of hostility towards the Muslims. Muslim leaders became increasingly aware of this factor as well, and this made the pattern of the Muslim struggle for existence and liberty so complex and so difficult.

Haidar 'Ali and Tipu Sultan were the earliest Muslim leaders to recognize the vigour of the British threat. Tipu Sultan was one of the most remarkable persons in the history of Islam. At a time when most Muslim politicians and leaders were still incapable of discerning the importance of the rise of European nations, Tipu developed a world consciousness. He reformed his army, introduced new arms and ideas of organization and discipline and recognized the importance of the western technique of experiment, by then almost lost to the Muslims. He thought of entering into an alliance with one European power to defeat another on an international basis, and visualized an alliance of Muslim powers to meet the new challenge. He

did not succeed partly because of the jealousies of his neighbours, especially the antagonism of the Nizam, and partly because the other Muslim powers did not have his vision. His main supporter could have been the Ottoman Empire; this alliance could have served a dual purpose. Tipu had to claim independence from the Mughul Empire, allegiance to which would have implied subservience to the Nizam. The Nizam utilized his legal position as viceroy of the Mughul Empire to claim the allegiance of the entire south.

To the Marathas this did not matter. Whatever their real objectives might have been, they claimed the right to collect *chauth*, not sovereignty. It is necessary to define and explain *chauth* to understand the legal position. It is difficult to say when *chauth* came into existence, but it certainly goes back to pre-Shivaji days. In many parts of the Muslim Empire, local chieftains were paid a commission of twenty-five per cent. upon the collections of the state demand on agricultural produce. This not only entitled the state to the co-operation of these influential chieftains in all matters, but also laid definite duties upon them. They helped to collect the state demand and were responsible for the maintenance of peace in the area. If there was any breach of peace, the chieftains receiving *chauth* were held responsible. In cases of untraced murders, robberies and thefts the chieftains had to indemnify those who had lost relations or property. If they were unable to maintain peace, they lost their commission, and if they were culpably negligent or were found to be in conspiracy with criminals, they were punished. The Marathas demonstrated that the chieftains, mostly Hindus, though some of them were Muslims as well, could not maintain peace in the face of Maratha depredations. They, therefore, demanded *chauth* in reality as the price of their abstaining from plunder

and pillage, but ostensibly as the wages of maintaining peace. Of course, unlike the local chieftains, subservient to Mughul authority, they took no real responsibility for keeping the countryside free of crime. The legal position, however, was that they demanded from the Mughuls no rights of sovereignty, they only demanded the right and the wages of giving the dominions respite from organized robbery. The governor who was made to pay this ransom for his charge, had still to provide for the maintenance of internal peace, and thus, either by plunder or by having to pay the *chauth*, the Empire was bled white. Having lost power, the Emperor and his independent governors were most anxious to retain their legal position, and the Marathas showed the grace of not questioning it. On the other hand, where it suited their purpose, they exploited it to their advantage. It has already been mentioned how they persuaded some of the theologians to give a ruling that it was not necessary to resist Maratha domination. Even if the legal position of the Marathas had been palpably different and if they had thought it necessary to claim sovereignty, it would not have mattered to them. For them the maintenance of the legal myth of Mughul sovereignty was politically expedient; it was a political convenience, not a matter of conscience.

Tipu Sultan's position was different. He claimed independence; there was nothing new in a Muslim ruler owning no allegiance to a superior authority. Ever since the split in the caliphate, the concept of the legal unity of the Muslim world had declined. The Mughuls themselves claimed to be caliphs within their own realm and did not think it necessary to recognize any other ruler as the caliph for the entire Muslim world. The legal prestige of the Mughuls, however, was high and thus all usurpers to Mughul authority in the various parts of the Empire walked warily. Muslim allegiance to a central authority, however, was

not only politically expedient, it was also a matter of conscience, because unjustified rebellion against properly constituted authority is against the *Shar'*. Muslim potentates, therefore, would lose Muslim support, if they rebelled ostensibly. It is true that support could often be purchased or even obtained by force, but the loyalty of the true Muslim could not be won by one who rebelled wantonly. Tipu Sultan was branded as a rebel; his efforts to secure recognition from the Mughul court were thwarted by the agents of the Nizam. It was necessary, therefore, that he should obtain a sufficiently sound legal status and this he could do from the Ottoman Sultan, who was caliph not only in his own realm, but claimed greater jurisdiction because of his possession of the Hijaz and also the investiture of his ancestor by the last 'Abbasid caliph of Egypt. If the Ottoman Empire had been strong and vigorous, it would have welcomed this opportunity of expanding its influence in South India. The decay of the Mughul Empire could have added to its opportunities. But the Turkish Empire had already lost its vigour; it had neither the will nor the resources to embark upon a new adventure, and all that Tipu got in reality was an appeal from the Turkish caliph that he should not build up an alliance with France, because France was, at that time, the enemy of the Ottomans; Tipu was asked instead to side with the British who, being opposed to France, were the friends of Turkey.

The British succeeded first in isolating Tipu Sultan and then crushing him. Of all Indian rulers and leaders who resisted British expansion in the subcontinent no one has been so maligned as Tipu, who incurred the greatest displeasure and hatred of the British. The main reason seems to be that no one else understood so well the implications of the gradual expansion of British power in India and no one else attempted to adopt the only methods which could have been successful in ousting

the British. Tipu Sultan did not succeed because the Indian and the international situations alike were unfavourable to him, and also because his purpose and aims were not understood by contemporary Indian potentates. The British, more vigilant and conscious of their own aims and the conditions necessary for achieving them, could not tolerate such an enemy. This also explains the vilification to which he was subjected.

The position of the Muslims rapidly deteriorated as far as their political power was concerned; and, yet, they were not able to plan their political future with any clarity of vision. Nor, perhaps was such planning possible in those days. The rise of British power in itself was ~~misleading~~, because it concealed the truth that the Muslims being a minority could not hope to rule India for all time to come. It was possible when their own prestige was high and when Islam was politically vigorous and still powerful in the areas surrounding India. The defences of Muslim power were breached when the European nations snatched the supremacy over the sea from Muslim hands. They succeeded because Muslim commerce had been peaceful and every European vessel was fitted in such a way that it could be converted into a man-of-war whenever the need arose. The Egyptian fleet had quelled piracy sufficiently well in eastern waters to make it unnecessary for the Muslim trading vessels to be heavily armed, and, by now, the Europeans had achieved superiority in artillery. The downfall of the Mughul Empire coincided with the decay of Islamic power elsewhere, hence the dream of establishing an empire in India in competition with the British was out of the question. These factors were not appreciated fully by Muslim leaders, and thus the dream of a Muslim empire persisted until it was killed completely in the failure of the "Mutiny." Even then the ignorant among the

Muslim masses vaguely dreamed of a day when the Faith would triumph politically. The number of such persons was not large, nor were their views cogent or based upon sound thinking, yet this phenomenon shows that the spark was not dead. In the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, the desire to revive the glory and power of Islam was widespread and attracted the best endeavour of the most sincere and devoted sections of the Muslim society.

One such organized effort was the movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. This leader had a dynamic personality; he had the ardour of a martyr, the courage of a warrior and the mystic inspiration of a saint. He was soon fired with the conviction that he was the man of destiny who would lead his people to success; his saintly character which combined the highest qualities of selfless sacrifice and prayerful dependence upon guidance from God gathered round him a devoted band of followers. The strategy of his movement was sound in its broader conceptions. The Sikh kingdom established in an area which had a majority of Muslims was known to be harsh towards Muslim observances and way of life; it restricted the free practice of Islam and it was thus the sacred duty of all Muslims to liberate fellow Muslims from such tyranny. For this movement were to be enlisted the sympathies of Muslim potentates of means; the organization was to work in British held India for recruiting warriors and collecting funds but the fighting was to be in the North-West Frontier whose independent and warlike tribes were expected to help. If the Panjab could be brought under Muslim rule, it could act as a centre for the gradual recovery of other parts of India.

The enthusiasm which the movement created was the greatest testimony of the earnest Muslim desire to work for the revival of Islam. The moral regeneration

which had been slowly taking place was bearing some fruit. Shah Waliullah and others who followed him were constant in their effort to fight corrosive elements in the outlook of the people and now that a leadership offered them an opportunity, they showed that they were willing to endure hardships and make sacrifices for a cause. In those days of primitive means of communication, it was not a light hearted venture for a Bengali peasant to forsake his family and belongings and seek religious elation in fighting an organized and militarily strong government on the outskirts of the tribal areas in a climate not only so different but infinitely harsher than that of his home. It was great faith which made such a phenomenon possible. Its influence on the character of the participants was ennobling; such a movement would have been impossible without the silent work of moral regeneration which had been going on almost since the days of the *Mujaddid*; but the movement itself quickened the pace of moral recovery.

The movement failed, however, because of its inherent weakness and the machinations of its opponents. Since Sayyid Ahmad was deeply religious, he could not but insist on the fullest conformity with Islam; this led to the need of giving occasional rulings whether or not a particular act was Islamic or otherwise. One of his followers who exercised a deep influence upon the movement was Maulana Isma'il Shahid, who was a puritan, a reformist and intolerant of practices which he considered to be against or without sound authority. Pushed a little to the extreme, this created misgivings in the minds of some sincere persons who held different views. Since the Wahhabi movement had gained strength in peninsular Arabia, Maulana Isma'il was branded as a Wahhabi and the entire movement was confused with Wahhabiism. As extreme Wahhabiism and especially

the reports circulated about it, which were exaggerated, had aroused grave hostility, the movement of Sayyid Ahmad was opposed by many conservative theologians. Later the movement came into conflict with the British authorities and its leaders were prosecuted for high treason and severely punished. In the north-west as well, tribal leaders found irksome the strictly puritanical government established by the *mujahids*, as the fighters against the Sikhs were called. In addition, authority was concentrated in the hands of the leaders and supporters of the movement who had come from elsewhere, and this the tribal leaders positively disliked. The tribal areas were not used to taxation and Sayyid Ahmad's government being strictly Islamic did not forego the legal *zakat*. The result was that the tribal chiefs rebelled and the movement's strength was broken. It continued to linger, but lost its effectiveness. It failed in its political objectives, but it succeeded in inspiring the Indian Muslims with a burning desire for religious reform as well as political well-being.

The next upheaval came in 1857. It came suddenly as the result of the grievances of the sepoys who had feared that the British intended to subvert their religion. The Marathas tried to exploit the situation in their own favour and they planned their strategy and programme more wisely. Their aim was obviously the restoration of their own authority. The Muslims do not seem to have been so well organized; they revolted because of genuine grievances; but once having risen they could think only of rallying round the emblem of their power, the aged Mughul Emperor, Bahadur Shah. Few among the politically intelligent Muslims were of the opinion that there was much likelihood of the restoration of Muslim power. And yet, such was the desire for the recovery of lost power that the movement gathered great support among the Muslims. The British singled them out for revenge and the

penalty which the Muslims paid was heavy. Ancient and prosperous families were impoverished because the British, without real and judicial inquiry, confiscated, in their fury, the estates of those who were suspected of having participated in the rebellion or abetted it, or who were even falsely implicated by selfish and false informers. Delhi, which had still a large number of wealthy and prominent families and which had held the torch of the Muslim renaissance aloft in most difficult days, lost its pre-eminence. Other cities and townships in the United Provinces and Bihar also suffered very badly. It seemed that the Muslims of North India had made one blind superhuman effort to drag themselves out of the mire of decadence and had failed; it would have been rash at that time for anyone to prophesy that they could yet be saved. A movement created by deep emotions which had been smouldering in Muslim hearts, without proper leadership or plan, had emerged unpremeditated with consuming energy and violence like the convulsions of a strong body which tries to rescue itself from the clutches of certain death; that body had now fallen, it seemed, never to rise again.

It was at this juncture, however, that Indian Islam produced a most remarkable man. The real greatness of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan has yet to be gauged. He was able to see that the Indian Muslims must change their way of thinking. They must take cognizance of the world in which they were living. It was impossible for them to challenge the might of the British Empire, much less of western civilization. He analysed the causes of western dominance and at its root he found western progress in science. Weak, defeated, disheartened and disorganized, the Indian Muslims had little hope of survival if the British were bent upon their humiliation, or, possibly even, destruction. He must, therefore, first bring about a reconciliation between the

Muslims and the British Indian government. He tried to remove the misconceptions in the British mind against them by explaining their grievances and the causes of the revolt. He knew that even if the British were reconciled the Indian Muslims could not make any progress without western education and science. He founded the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh where the sons of good Muslim families were to be educated in their own as well as western learning. The Muslims, proud of their own culture and afraid of the corroding influence of a foreign and Christian outlook in education upon the mentality of their own children, had hitherto remained aloof from the schools established by the British in order to teach English to the natives. Macaulay himself had hoped to raise a race of brown Englishmen in India through the new system of education and the British had high hopes of weaning away Indians from their own faiths through education; it is not surprising, therefore, that a culture and religion conscious people, who respected the values which had moulded their lives, stood aloof. Sir Syed had a difficult task in persuading his people that they could adopt this education and yet hope to remain Muslims.

He approached his objective by two methods, in his own college he provided for the teaching of Islamic theology and the inculcation of an Islamic way of life; outside he fought against unscientific and irrational interpretations which had often been foisted upon Islam by those who had been nurtured in outmoded schools of philosophy. Sir Syed's campaign to put forward a rational interpretation of Islam is one of his most impressive achievements. In an age when several Hindu scholars had turned Christian because they could not reconcile several beliefs widely held among the Hindus with contemporary science, it was far-sighted of Sir Syed to devote his attention to bringing the interpretation of Islamic texts into accord

with the new philosophy and science. This naturally had an adverse effect upon the progress of his movement, because it made opposition to his ideas more bitter and confused the need of modern education with what the orthodox thought to be new-fangled and heterodox ideas in religion. With a remarkable clarity of thought and perseverance Sir Syed not only kept up the struggle but also broadened his programme. He himself took up the task of explaining the feelings and frustrations of the Indians in general and his own community in particular to the British rulers. He pointed out the shortcomings of British policy which had led to the "Mutiny". Some officials were annoyed at his frank criticism, but the more thoughtful and sober among them appreciated his sincerity. He also undertook to remove misconceptions against Islam in western minds and produced a cogent apologia, but like all such writings, it was not so successful. Of course here he was confronted with almost an impossible task; it was not easy to remove the mountains of prejudice, bias and hatred which had piled up ever since the Crusades through continuous misrepresentation.

Among his own co-religionists he was more successful. His lectures as well as his articles in his periodical, the *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*, aroused great hostility and he and his followers were nicknamed *necharis*, believers in the laws of natural sciences rather than in the doctrine of Islam; but because this charge, which was founded on Sir Syed's rather unimaginative dictum that religious truths should be understood in accordance with the laws of nature as defined by science, was backed with greater vehemence than with convincing logic, it soon wore out. Indeed even so great a man as the pioneer of the revived unity movement in the Islamic world, the great Jamal-ud-din al-Afghani thought it necessary to write against Sir

Syed's religious opinions, but in the later nineteenth century, with all the prestige that science commanded, Sir Syed's views achieved an ever increasing popularity among the constantly growing number of Indian Muslims who had received modern education on the western pattern, until their popularity increased to such an extent that the word '*nechari*' became obsolete. They gave life to the movement of rational interpretation in Islam.

It was natural that this should happen; men will always understand spiritual truth in the context of their background and mental equipment. Islam being simple and remarkably free from dogma, presents no inherent difficulty in the way of such understanding; and such movements have always thrived in Islam because of its own rational approach to matters of faith and law. Today a great deal of what Sir Syed said has passed into the composition of an educated Pakistani or Indian Muslim's belief. Sir Syed was unimaginative in thinking that every idea in the *Qur'an* must be meticulously subjected to the laws of nature as demonstrated in the world and understood by the scientists; but then Sir Syed had to be logical. His greatness does not so much lie in giving a "scientific" interpretation to religious truth, nor in creating a new school of scholasticism, as in putting his co-religionists in the subcontinent on a path which saved them many a mental and spiritual conflict. It was one of the results of Sir Syed's efforts that Islam emerged triumphant from the attacks of a pseudo-philosophy based upon the conclusions of still incomplete investigations into physical laws. The strength of Islamic feeling in the subcontinent, particularly among those sections which have come into intimate contact with western thought, owes much to the efforts of Sir Syed; because of his work the Muslims of the subcontinent were saved from that creeping atheism to which some other Muslim societies were subjected.

Sir Syed left hardly any aspect of life untouched.

His articles in the *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq* show that he tried to reform dress, manners, customs and fashions of living. Everywhere his effort was to bring about a compromise between Islam and the west. He tried to preserve the values for which Islam stood and to root out all that offended his sense of propriety and which he considered to be un-Islamic in essentials. He started writing in simple prose and discarded the ornateness and artificiality which had crept into Urdu, and thus achieved a directness and charm which set a fashion. His writing had dignity and elegance without bombast or painstaking efforts to produce unnecessary effect. This may be taken as a symbol of his work. Today, a century after he began his task, it is possible to judge his achievement in the proper context of history. The opposition, violent in those days, has died out; his main concept of the need to maintain harmony between one's intellect and faith without sacrificing spiritual solace and guidance or the promptings of secular knowledge achieved through inquiry is accepted by his people who have succeeded remarkably in this difficult enterprise. His broad ideal of a Muslim community which could maintain a steadfast loyalty to Islam without sacrificing the rewards of worldly progress is also the ideal of the Muslims in the subcontinent. They may not always succeed, indeed such a path is not easy to follow, but the goal has been well-defined and intelligent endeavour is directed towards it.

In the realm of politics, Sir Syed's views have found even greater justification. He was conscious of the might of the British in his own days and thus devoted his efforts to bringing about conciliation between them and his people; he was no less conscious of the democratic trends of the age in which he lived and he had no illusions about the tyranny that can be exercised by numerical majorities. Sir Syed had shown in his

life and work his great love of Islam and his people. He did not want the Indian Muslims to expose themselves to the hazards of living without any guarantee of their continued existence and rights. He could never accept the idea of Muslims being merged with other peoples and losing their identity in the process. He insisted, therefore, upon all rights and safeguards which would preserve their separate existence. This brought him into conflict with the Hindu dominated Indian National Congress; his ideas and teachings were the foundations on which the edifice of the Muslim League was raised. He was not the creator of the separate nationhood of the Indian Muslims; but he had the insight to see that it was a reality. His greatness will be apparent to anyone who realizes how other leaders of the Indian Muslims groped in the dark before they could see the light. This instinct of the Indian Muslim people worked blindly through their leaders in seeking minor safeguards for protecting their interests which seemed to cut right through the basic idea of a united Indian nationhood, until the logic of happenings and developments together with the results of this blind working of the instincts of the two nations unveiled the truth which Sir Syed had never ignored. He was truly one of the earlier architects of Pakistan, although he never referred to the idea of a separate Muslim state, but at that time the British were so firmly established that it would have been premature to think in terms of a sovereign independent existence and would have created grave misunderstandings against the exhausted Muslim nation in the minds of its British rulers who were capable of inflicting serious injury upon it. The idea need not have been absent completely from Sir Syed's mind, because Sayyid Jamal-ud-din al-Afghani thought that the destiny of the Central Asian, Afghan, and Western Indian Muslim was to be the citizens of a republic

which would embrace these areas.

Sir Syed built up a small nucleus of Muslim leadership around himself. The Aligarh school of leaders mainly devoted themselves to educational work; their interest in politics was secondary. Their philosophy was that education being the basic need of the Indian Muslims, they should concentrate all their efforts upon this. They were helped by the apparent advantages of education in those days in the shape of the economic welfare and prosperity of those who were able to benefit from it. The Aligarh school did good work, but it was impossible to find a shelter cloistered from politics in a world which was witnessing mighty changes. Their devotion to educational work made the Aligarh school of leaders dependent upon English support without which the educational programme could not have been pushed forward. The Muslims needed more independent and dynamic leadership in the field of politics. The Aligarh school, therefore, began to lose its hold upon the Muslims, although, of course, by now they were fully conscious of the need for modern education and the desirability of having their own institutions where a grounding in Islamic values and ideology could be combined with western education.

The Oxford educated, brilliant Mahomed Ali gradually came to the forefront. The Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 brought new disasters to the Muslim world. So long as there was some conflict among the imperialist powers, the weak countries of the Muslim world could eke out an existence by playing one power off against another, but new groupings in Europe brought Russia, France and Great Britain together to the dismay of the weaker nations. Afghanistan, Iran, the Ottoman Empire, Morocco—all were adversely affected, and the Muslims of India saw with consternation the rapid enslavement of these Muslim lands. Having lost their own freedom,

they had found consolation in the freedom of other Muslims. As they had no political axe of their own to grind, they could take a dispassionate view of the problems of the Muslim world. It seemed to them that the major ill from which the world of Islam suffered was its lack of unity; a diagnosis which was to prove tragically true in the revolt of the Arabs against the Turks at the instigation of the British during the First World War, the dismemberment of the Arab world itself and the planting of the thorn of the state of Israel in the heart of Arab homelands. Highly emotional and altruistic in their aims, the Indian Muslims developed a strong love for the Muslim world; this was perhaps one of the best examples of a patriotism into which calculations of self-interest did not enter and which was based upon the love of an ideal, not upon affection for any territory. Consumed with a passion to save the world of Islam from disaster, which was not beyond human vision, and himself, deeply religious, emotional and courageous, Mahomed Ali was a true representative of the Indian Muslims at this stage in respect of his loyalties and aspirations. He was not worried whether his policies and activities would annoy the British, for the greater part of his life he found himself in conflict with them. His brilliant and powerful writings in his weekly review, *The Comrade*, were read with avidity. Pan-Islamic fervour had been fanned by many a writer and poet, but in Mahomed Ali it found a servant and a fighter. The philosopher poet, Iqbal, touched the hearts of all who read his poems by his eloquent advocacy of an undivided Islam, which, as he rightly pointed out in line after line of compelling and persuasive verse, does not recognize any barriers of class, colour, race, language or country. Iqbal's poetry and Mahomed Ali's leadership were the most formative influences in the earlier part of the century. Their thoughts and

leadership fashioned the ideology of Indian Muslims.

The forces which were at work towards the disintegration of the Muslim world were too strong, however, and it seemed that recovery was impossible. The First World War put the patience of the Indian Muslims to a severe test; their popular leaders who represented their views truly were imprisoned; the Ottoman Empire lost valuable and extensive territories and it seemed that no independent sovereign Muslim state would survive; Enver Pasha's attempt to resurrect Islamic sovereignty in Central Asia failed in the face of internal treachery and Bolshevik aggression; there was no ray of light on the dark horizon.

The war being over, Mahomed Ali was released. The desperate situation called for the greatest effort of which the Indian Muslims were capable; if they agitated strongly they might influence British public opinion. Indian nationalists were also disturbed because they felt that promises for the transfer of greater power to the Indians should now be redeemed, and they realized that the measure of the reforms would necessarily be determined by the intensity of demand. The enactment of Rowlatt Act which provided for the incarceration of suspected terrorists and conspirators against the British rule without an open and proper trial set off an agitation of vast proportions. The firing in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar where a large crowd assembled in an area enclosed by high walls and few exits, the proclamation of Martial Law in Amritsar and Lahore, the infliction of humiliating punishments—like orders to crawl on the ground—upon innocent citizens, infuriated Indian public opinion. The leadership of the Indian national movement had by now passed into the hands of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who had developed a successful technique of agitation in South Africa. He saw the advantage of using Indo-Muslim discontent to advance the cause

of Indian freedom. Mahomed Ali realized that the impact of an agitation by Indian Muslims would be greatly enhanced if the Hindus also agitated against the British government. Thus the two leaders united and a mass agitation of great strength confronted the British.

Gandhi could see that the Indian Muslims, by demanding a fairer deal for the Turks, did not injure the Indian cause in any manner, hence he saw no harm in supporting the Khilafat Movement. Certain sectors of Hindu opinion were, however, disturbed because they considered Pan-Islamism in any form a danger to India and particularly to Indian nationalism. The Muslims were happy that there should be this happy marriage between their nationalism and Pan-Islamism. They had come to believe that the greatest danger to the Muslim cause came from the British interests in India. To hold India it was necessary for the British to control the strategic points in the sea route between Great Britain and India, and because the Islamic world stood athwart that route, the British desired to dominate it. Therefore, to weaken British hold on India meant a lessening of pressure upon independent Muslim countries. The freedom of India was also worth every effort because Indian Muslims hoped that they would be full partners in such freedom. The Muslim masses, it seemed, had discovered a new patriotism; from their desire to see a powerful Islam in the subcontinent they were in all sincerity converted to the desire of living in a free India. The Non-cooperation Movement, which was evolved out of Gandhi's technique of *satyagrah* or passive resistance for the vindication of a just cause, received canonical blessings from the doctors of Islamic Law. This emotional upsurge in favour of freedom and unity was so great that it seemed that no practical difficulties could stand in the way of the evolution of a common nationhood in

the subcontinent. The Muslims themselves were so ardent in this feeling that they made much greater sacrifices for the cause than any other community. This spell, however, did not last long. The disillusionment which came in the wake of such enthusiasm was equally great.

When the outbreak of violence in Chauri Chaura led Gandhi to withdraw the more militant features of the Non-cooperation Movement, the Movement itself showed signs of weakening. The principal leaders were imprisoned after having been tried for one political offence or the other. At a time when most of the Hindu and Muslim leaders were in jail, an Arya Samajist leader, Shraddhanand, started two movements, one was called *Shuddhi* and the other *Sangathan*. The first, which means "purification", was aimed at the "purification" or mass conversion of large sections of the Muslims, who should ultimately all be assimilated into Hinduism. The other, which means "holding together", aimed at the integration of the Hindus into a strong fighting entity, physically fit and economically self-sufficient. This organization was directed against the Muslims. On various pretexts riots were engineered, conventions regarding the customary respect shown to mosques and Muslim prayers were wilfully violated; Muslim shopkeepers, peddlers, craftsmen and others were boycotted. The Muslims were taken unawares by the fury and success of these movements and either the unwillingness or the inability of such Hindu leaders as had advocated unity to curb them. The Muslims tried to reply by organizing counter-movements of *Tabligh* and *Tanzim*, but they were weak, partly because many Muslims still believed in the ideal of unity and considered these activities injurious to the cause of freedom and partly because of the poverty of the Muslims and their lack of economic resources.

The Muslims were further alarmed when they read

the schemes for absorbing them into the Hindu fold being openly discussed in the press. One of the pillars of nationalism, Lajpat Rai, declared that the Muslims, so long as they were Muslims, could never be good Indians. Har Dayal, a revolutionary in exile, advocated that the Muslims should call themselves Muhammadi Hindus, adopt Hindu names, manners and customs, and in short settle down as a sect of Hinduism, which embraces within its fold many a different creed. It took the Muslims, however, a considerable time to understand all the implications of these happenings and to seek some way out of their difficulties. For almost a decade they remained confused and hopeful that the Hindus would realize the need for unity and stop thinking in ways which could never create a united nation.

It may be asked: What led the Hindus to inaugurate and support such movements at a time when the ideal of unity was so popular? Why did they deliberately seek to drive the Muslims into despair about being able to remain good Indians without losing all that they had come to cherish in their outlook and way of life? Why was this of all times chosen to undermine a sense of unity? Why did the Hindu nationalist leaders either succumb to the new forces or fail to control them? It would be wrong to characterize the initiation of these movements as wilful sabotage. Throughout the history of the Indian National Congress, the Muslims had been ineffective in moulding its policies. They had mostly stood away from the movement. Men like Mohamed Ali Jinnah, it is true, had achieved eminence in its councils, but their influence was based upon their personal ability, not upon any mass Muslim following. With the Non-cooperation Movement, Muslim leaders entered the Indian National Congress as leaders of the Muslim masses. The Muslims were now learning the technique of mass resistance and had demonstrated

that they were not inferior to the Hindus in their ability to practise it. The awakening of the Muslim masses caused misgiving in Hindu minds, because, for those who believed in the desirability of absorbing the Muslims into Hinduism, any political consciousness among them would present a serious obstacle. It was better to check the growing Muslim influence in Indian politics then, rather than to wait until it became too strong. Whatever might have been in the minds of a few of the nationalist leaders who believed in tolerance and unity, the mass of the Hindu population was guided by the dumb and potent instincts of Hinduism which gradually spreads its tentacles and crushes and absorbs other doctrines and peoples who seek a habitat in India. This instinctive urge asserted itself at a crucial point when it seemed that Hinduism was likely to compromise itself by undertaking to tolerate a partner. The movements of *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* became popular with the Hindu masses; most of the Hindu leaders were also deeply affected; those few who were capable of rising above these emotions were powerless. Lajpat Rai and Har Dayal spoke the mind of Hinduism more truly. Gradually it dawned upon the Muslims that they could not, with any hope of success, endeavour to seek partnership in a common Indian nationalism on terms which would ensure them an honourable future. It would not have taken them so long to realize this important truth if they had watched the course of events more carefully and critically.

The *bhakti* movement has been mentioned in an earlier part of this chapter, where it was pointed out that this brought about greater understanding between the Hindus and the Muslims. The Muslim rulers had, from the very beginning, endeavoured to create more contacts with the Hindus in order to conciliate them to their rule. They had patronized vernacular literatures, encouraged the translation of the Sanskrit classics and

scriptures into Persian as well as local languages. In their architecture, they had not hesitated to introduce such Hindu features as would harmonize with its spirit, in their poetry many a Hindu simile and feeling was permitted to enter; they had adopted Hindu principles of music; their culinary arts had succumbed to the blandishments of the hot chilli and the sour tamarind, thus sacrificing the subtle flavours of meats and vegetables to more pronounced tastes; their language had been replaced by a mixture of Prakritic syntax and grammar with Islamic vocabulary; they had ceased to be Arabs, Turks, Persians or Afghans and had become Indians. Their new habitat, which was overwhelmingly non-Muslim and Hindu was their home; it was to this new home that they gave the affection which men give to their countries. They tried to bring themselves as near the Hindus as they could without sacrificing Islam; they could not become Hindus, but the catholicity of Islam permitted them great latitude in identifying themselves with the people of the subcontinent. They were conscious of their religious heritage, and this they could not barter away. Their cultural heritage was also great, but they were willing to enrich it further by accepting whatever Hinduism could offer without destroying the Islamic elements of their culture. If they had set no limits upon assimilation they would have lost Islam itself. Hinduism responded; it also began to adapt itself to the new needs, for many a generation Muslim morality as distinct from the Islamic religion was the social code. Muslim refinements, politeness and mannerisms were the fashion. The administrative objectives and institutions evolved by Muslim administrators were accepted even after the downfall of the Mughul Empire; Muslim etiquette and ceremonial were adopted by the Hindu courts; Persian and later Urdu, were the languages of the cultured.

These were the bridges which the two cultures had

built for friendly intercourse, but with the rise of a new luminary on the political horizon, Hinduism saw no need to orient itself towards the apparently setting sun of Islam. All the compromises which Hinduism had now to make were to be made with the British and their religion and their culture. However, in the attempt to adapt itself to face the new challenges it sought to preserve all that it could in its own culture, and thus, it began to discard all the elements which it had borrowed from Islam. This process had been encouraged and accelerated by British efforts, but in any case it was natural. When the Rajputs and the Marathas revolted against the Mughul Empire they had been urged by the same instinct. Resurgent Hinduism could not tolerate any trace of the domination of Islam. The existence of the Muslim minority at best could be tolerated; it certainly could not be permitted to alter the course which Hinduism was determined to follow to recapture its glory. As Muslims endeavoured to resist all attempts at reducing them to subservience, a conflict developed which undid all the work of the centuries in which had participated statesmen, saints, thinkers, poets and men of all descriptions trying to build up an understanding and unity between the two peoples. With the debris of the constructive effort of centuries around them, the Muslims of the sub-continent stood alone, destined, it seemed, to pass from one slavery to another. They were weak, disorganized and backward, hardly equipped for a great struggle, standing on the cross-roads of destiny without knowing in which direction safety lay and yet determined to fight for their right of existence and freedom.

The following pages tell the remarkable story of their survival and their attainment of sovereign status as the emblem of their freedom.

CHAPTER II

SYMPTOMS OF DECLINE

It would be a truism to say that the decline of the Mughul Empire was the result of complex factors working over a long time. One of the most important aspects of this decline was the weakening of central authority in the period immediately after 'Alamgir's death. The factors which contributed to this weakness were also manifold and must be traced over a longer period.

Of all these factors perhaps the most potent were those relating to the army. Akbar organized the Mughul army on an efficient basis in the *mansabdari* system. But the system was not without its inherent defects which became more and more pronounced with the passage of time. The figures of the commands did not show the real number of soldiers commanded, and the strength of the Mughul army was far less than the high figures denoted by the ranks of the *mansabdars*. The total strength of the army was in every reign smaller than was necessary for the military needs of a big and expanding Empire. A close study of the strength and the performance of the Mughul army leads to two important conclusions: the armed strength of the Empire was not commensurate with its military responsibilities and secondly, the striking power of the army was not proportionate to its numerical strength. The long war in the Deccan during the reign of 'Alamgir put a great strain upon the army and reduced its morale and vitality which under more capable leadership could have been restored but the selfishness of higher officials prevented any such efforts.

"The delegation of the duties of recruitment and

administration of the army to the *Mansabdars*, while it relieved the central government of the expense and trouble of maintaining a heavy establishment, offered a strong temptation to corruption and abuse.”¹ When the efficiency of the administration was intact, close supervision by the department of the *bakhshi* eliminated fraud and deceit, but with the weakening of the monarch’s authority, standards deteriorated. Besides the *mansabdari* system created a permanent relationship between the *mansabdar* and his troops which was fatal for the authority of the monarch. Capable and strong emperors were able to maintain control, but under the weak successors of ‘Alamgir their control became feeble and the *mansabdars* became refractory. Central control had safeguarded the welfare of the soldiers, and its complex method of supervision and payment prevented the diversion of funds meant for the upkeep of the soldiers to the private coffers of the *mansabdars*; with the weakening of control, the soldiers were ill-paid and their morale deteriorated.

One of the important reasons for Babur’s success in India was his superior strategy. The First Battle of Panipat, apart from being a historic fight, was also a classic piece of planned strategy; it was mainly for this reason that from the beginning to the end Babur was in full control of the battle. As the Empire became well established, strategy and tactics became stereotyped. Even when it was confronted with new enemies employing new methods of warfare, it failed to adjust and change its methods. Mughul leaders, in fact, showed an utter immobility of mind in this connection. It was left to the foresight and intelligence of a minister of a small Deccan principality to make full use of guerrilla tactics.

Again and again the Mughuls found themselves helpless against guerrilla warfare. In the Deccan, in the

¹ *Mansabdari System*, p. 186.

north-west tribal areas, in the north-east frontier regions, almost everywhere, the story was repeated. Their armies were unwieldy; but the Mughuls stuck to their old methods. For reasons of prestige, they did not reduce unnecessary paraphernalia; nor did they adapt their strategy to the exigencies of new situations. The appearance of the western seafaring nations on the coasts of India from the end of fifteenth century onwards should have been sufficient warning to Indian rulers of the rising importance of sea-power. Western domination did not burst on India with the suddenness of a volcano. It grew gradually and steadily from very humble beginnings right under the eyes of the Mughul rulers. Yet they failed to take due notice of it and to learn lessons regarding the importance of sea-power. Indeed the Mughuls never developed a proper navy, and their authority did not extend beyond the coast of their territories.

Even in the matter of siege-trains and artillery, the Persians and the Europeans excelled the Mughuls. The Persians improved their artillery when they came into conflict with the Ottoman Turks who excelled all other Asiatic powers in this arm and whose example inspired the Iranians. The Europeans, on the other hand, were making full use of their scientific discoveries and their firearms were far superior to their Mughul counterparts.

The size of the Mughul camp was another serious hindrance to the employment of their armed strength to the best advantage. A Mughul camp was virtually a moving city, with its plan of bazaars, roads and lanes, and the arrangement of royal and other tents more or less permanently fixed. The women in the Emperor's household as well as in the households of nobles and officers accompanied the camp. A whole army of servants, hangers-on and camp-followers was an inseparable part of the royal camp.

This vast and unwieldy conglomeration of men,

women, horses, beasts of burden, tents and furniture naturally could move only slowly. It was a far cry from the small, compact, mobile columns of Babur and it compared most unfavourably with the Maratha light horse or with the tribal fighters of the north-eastern and north-western regions. The nobles and generals emulated the example of their Sovereign in their expeditions. It is difficult to explain why the later Mughul Emperors and ministers failed to appreciate the obvious value of mobility when confronted with a highly mobile enemy. It appears that the Mughuls were being slowly buried under the weight of their own traditions. They were losing that quality of mental alertness which is so essential in a ruling class.

The Mughul nobles and officers, on whom the ultimate responsibility for conducting the administration and fighting the wars of the Empire devolved, showed a woeful lack of public virtue towards the end. There were many in this class who were honest and were devoted to the interests of the state, but they were outnumbered by those who were not. To selfishness they also added short-sightedness. Their mutual relations were marked by jealousy and lack of co-operation. The later Mughul nobility was an aristocracy of culture but not of public virtue. They maintained their traditions of culture and patronage of arts and letters; but, except in some instances, they lost their patriotic spirit.

Cases of bribery and of mutual dissensions can be quoted *ad nauseum*. They seldom achieved anything substantial unless the Emperor himself came to supervise and co-ordinate their endeavours. Later they spent more energy in quarrelling amongst themselves than in fighting the enemy. In the long, never-ending war which 'Alamgir conducted against the Marathas after the conquest of Bijapur and Golconda, he had to lead every campaign and conduct each siege personally in order to ensure success. The

frail Emperor had to move from place to place in the ceaseless and ubiquitous strife. "The chief reason for the prolongation of the Deccan campaign was the mutual distrust and jealousy of the nobles," says Khafi Khan.¹ The Emperor in his old age was far more painstaking than most of his officers, far junior to him in age. "Owing to my marching through wildernesses and forests, my officers who love repose, long for the termination of my life," woefully observed the old Emperor.² It is obvious how much could be expected from such men when there was no man of iron will to supervise them. Under the successors of 'Alamgir, nobles assigned to themselves numerous offices to increase their power; this naturally resulted in inefficiency and maladministration.

The Deccan wars of 'Alamgir, had sapped the energy and drained the resources of the Mughul Empire. It was Akbar who initiated a forward policy in the Deccan. All his great successors ceaselessly pursued that policy. But no Mughul reign saw so much conflict and strife in that quarter as 'Alamgir's reign. The Deccan problem, as it presented itself to 'Alamgir, was most delicate. The Deccan Muslim states were on the decline and they were in the process of dissolution. They were constantly losing ground to the Marathas. This slow process of dissolution and absorption by the Marathas, when completed, would have made the Marathas masters of all the Deccan and would have given them an immense advantage in the struggle for the seizure of power from the Mughuls. It was imperative for 'Alamgir to conquer the Muslim states in the Deccan before they were swallowed up by the land-hungry Maratha marauders. Under the circumstances 'Alamgir had little option and was forced to annex them. For him to look on quietly, while

¹ Khafi Khan, II, 488.

² *Anecdotes*.

the Marathas ate into the Deccan states like spreading cancer, would have been suicidal.

While recognizing the unavoidable necessity of 'Alamgir's Deccan policy, it has also to be recognized that the war put too great a strain upon the resources of the Empire. The return in the form of revenue for the immense outlay in men, money and time was infinitesimally small. "The wastage of the Deccan war, which raged intensely for twenty years, was one hundred thousand soldiers and followers and three times that number of horses every year."¹ In the imperial camp pestilence was always present and the daily mortality was heavy from the immense number of men crowded together.² The length of the war itself exhausted Mughul morale and resources.

After the conquest of Golconda and Bijapur, the war against the Marathas was intensified. In the pitched battles the Mughuls generally got the better of the Marathas but the latter were an elusive enemy and possessed great mobility. Once or twice they were able to inflict military defeats on the Mughuls and forced Mughul commanders to capitulate.³ Their main weapon, however, was their irregular guerrilla fighting. They harassed Mughul columns, intercepted and looted the supplies and pillaged and ransacked the areas in which Mughul forces were operating, so that they had to go without supplies.⁴ Once they were bold enough to reach within four miles of the Emperor's camp.⁵ While 'Alamgir succeeded in defeating them again and again, he was never able to stop their corroding irregular warfare. Within the lifetime of 'Alamgir, the Marathas had extended their activities to Malwa, Berar and Gujarat. The general conditions are very

¹ *Storia*, IV, 96.

² *Ibid.*, p. 116.

³ Sarkar, V, 110-20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 187-89.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

well reflected in the following contemporary accounts :
 "The Marathas became completely dominant over the whole kingdom and closed the roads. By means of robbery they escaped from poverty and gained great wealth."¹

The result of this war was the extension of the Mughul sovereignty over South India; the Mughul Empire was now more extensive than any previous empire in the subcontinent. The Maratha depredations, however, brought about a general and sharp decline in the prosperity and fertility of war-ravished South Indian territories. Agriculture as well as industry and commerce declined. Bijapur was visited by a long and terrible plague which claimed more than half of the population. Famine stalked the entire Deccan. Grain sold at two to six *seers* a rupee. "Population has decreased in the three Deccan towns of Bijapur, Haidarabad and Burhanpur, while the villages round them have been totally ruined. From the Narmada south-wards, throughout the entire Deccan, in every pargana and village, the Marathas have spread like ants and locusts."²

One of the greatest concomitants of the protracted Deccan wars was the long absence of 'Alamgir from the north. He left for the Deccan in 1681, never to come back to the seat of his government. In the Mughul government the amount of attention which the Emperor was able to give to the administration made all the difference between efficiency and inefficiency. No Indian monarch gave such minute and painstaking attention to administration as 'Alamgir. But when he moved to the south and stayed there, it was humanly impossible for him, both because of distance and of military preoccupations, to exercise the same watchful supervision over the central administration as well as

¹ *Nuskha-i-Dil-kusha*, quoted by Sarkar, V, 237.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 239-40.

the administration of provinces other than those of the Deccan.

The unruly elements in the north were encouraged by the Emperor's absence in the south. The Sikhs and the Jats waxed in strength and the latter created considerable commotion in Agra, Malwa and the neighbouring areas. The main targets of their attack were the caravans which conveyed the revenues sent by the northern provinces to the Emperor in the Deccan.

Due to the laxity of administration in the north, the officials became corrupt and all forbidden cesses were revived by the local officers.¹

The Muslim Empire in India was always faced with an inherent difficulty. It started as the rule of an alien people over a vast population which had its own traditions of religion, culture and philosophy. The ancient Hindu civilization could not accept, without a struggle, a secondary position in its own habitat. In other lands the Muslim minority, after establishing its domination, strengthened its position by winning over the overwhelming majority of the people to Islam, and thus obliterated the distinction between the conquerors and the inhabitants. In India, the task was too stupendous. The Hindu majority persisted; Islam was successful in gaining the allegiance of a large number of people to its broad principles but not to its creed. The Muslims succeeded in reconciling the population to their rule, but it was impossible to create that kind of loyalty which is based upon an identity of outlook and ideology. Indeed, all Hindu rebellions exploited to the full the religious feelings of the population. The Empire could last either as a Muslim state subsisting mainly on the active loyalty of the Muslims, endeavouring to win such co-operation of the Hindus through justice, fairplay and good government as it could,

¹ Sarkar, V, 234 ; K.K. II, 550-51.

without parting with the essence of its power, or by converting it into an Indian empire by admitting Hindus into unreserved partnership, in which case it could not but, in the course of time, cease to be a Muslim empire.

The Sultanate of Delhi, while assuring the fullest protection of life and property to its non-Muslim subjects, was a Muslim state. It depended ultimately on the support of the Muslim soldiery and the Muslim people. The basis and the character of the state were well-defined. The Muslim character of the state was so enveloping that seldom did any party seek the support of non-Muslims in their frequent fights for the throne and power. Akbar made a major deviation from this basic policy. He based his power upon the active support of the Hindus and adopted a policy of making the Hindus partners in the core of the strength of the state.

Akbar's attempt to broaden the base of the Empire was fraught with far-reaching consequences. It set it on the inevitable course of being converted into a non-Muslim state. While the Empire gained the support of the Rajputs who fought valiantly against its enemies, it lost its exclusive Muslim basis and character. The rebellions in the eastern provinces and the interest and sympathy aroused by Prince Hakim's invasions of India are indications of the extent of the resentment felt by the orthodox Muslims towards Akbar's new policy. However, the overall strength of the Empire derived from the Mughuls and the new Rajput allies proved too strong for these currents of resentment. It gave place to indifference, against which were directed the ideology and teachings of the *Mujaddid-i-alf-thani*. The *Mujaddid* boldly opposed all plans to bring Islam and Hinduism together on the religious level which could not but loosen the Muslim grip on the sources of imperial strength. He clearly enunciated that Islam and *Kufr* were two different entities which could not be

fused together. The two reigns after Akbar saw a gradual change in policy; however in the person of Shah Jahan's eldest son, Dara Shukoh, Muslim orthodoxy once again came face to face with the same grave dangers which had raised their head in Akbar's days. Dara was greatly under the influence of Vedantic philosophy, and considered the differences between Islam and Hinduism as of little importance. In short he upheld the very doctrines against which the *Mujaddid* had struggled. Dara Shukoh was the heir apparent and his accession to the throne would have undone the *Mujaddid's* work. On the other hand, 'Alamgir, the most outstanding among the sons of Shah Jahan, had a reputation for orthodoxy. "Dara, sure of 'Alamgir's opposition after the Emperor's death, tried to win over the Hindus, with an eye to the future. 'Alamgir, on the other hand, endeared himself to the Muslims as a necessary set-off to Dara's policy.'" This was the beginning of the breach between 'Alamgir and the Hindus.

Relations between 'Alamgir and the Hindus were essentially cold. Neither of them was, in the beginning, unreservedly hostile to the other. A large number of cases can be cited in which 'Alamgir showed great regard for the Rajputs and treated them with consideration and favour; he even seems to have won some support. While a certain section of the Rajputs created trouble when 'Alamgir was busy suppressing rebellions elsewhere, other Rajputs played a leading role in the suppression of two major Hindu revolts, the Sat-nami and the Jat rebellions. They fought against the Afghans in the west and the Ahoms in the east. Mirza Raja Jai Singh proved the most successful of all the generals sent by 'Alamgir against the Marathas. It cannot, however, be gainsaid that the Rajputs did not

¹ Faruki, *Aurangzib and His Times*, p. 292.

extend to 'Alamgir the same unstinted and unflinching support as they had to earlier monarchs. Naturally they could not receive the same confiding trust and enthusiastic patronage to which they had become accustomed in earlier reigns.

For reasons of conviction as well as pressure of circumstances 'Alamgir tried to strengthen the Muslim element in his government and to shape his policy and administration in accordance with the *Shar'*. In the war for succession and survival between Dara and 'Alamgir, the Hindus generally supported the former while the latter's supporters were overwhelmingly Muslims. Muslim orthodox opinion was entirely in favour of Prince Aurangzib. After his victory and accession to the throne 'Alamgir shaped his policy in accordance with the expectations of those sections who had stood by him and had helped him in the struggle. He re-imposed the *jizyah* and ordered the demolition of a number of new temples built without the permission of the state. Simultaneously he abolished numerous taxes whose incidence fell exclusively or mostly on the Hindus.¹ These taxes were abolished because they were not sanctioned by the *Shari'at*. This fact gives us a clue to the motives that inspired him in his policy. It also demonstrates that 'Alamgir did not impose *jizyah* with the intention of injuring the Hindus economically or otherwise. The *Shar'* assures full protection to old and authorized places of worship belonging to non-Muslims. 'Alamgir carried out this injunction faithfully and issued orders to his officers, to ensure the sanctity of such temples. He even made grants to numerous Hindu places of worship.² As far as the observance of Hindu festivals and rites at the court was concerned, however, one might admire it as a

¹ 'Alamgir abolished 80 taxes, including one on Hindu pilgrims. Khafi Khan has mentioned a number of them. Vol. II, 87-89.

² For details see Faruki, *Aurangzib and His Times*, chap. IV.

liberal measure, it would be most unfair to expect it from one who wanted to act as a good Muslim monarch. However, it must be recognized that the net result of his policy was to antagonize strong elements among the Hindus.

Even if 'Alamgir had made no efforts to maintain Muslim domination, the results would not have been different; so long as there was a Muslim Emperor on the throne, psychological factors would militate against the Empire. Even Akbar was not able to overcome the Hindu sentiment completely; when the Jats took possession of Agra, it is significant that they took out his bones from his grave and burnt them. The effects of 'Alamgir's religious policy, therefore, can be exaggerated. The causes for the Hindu revolts were numerous; the religious feeling was exploited, but this was not the basis of the revolt. In Rajputana there were dynastic reasons; in other instances they were based mainly upon political opportunism to take advantage of difficult situations. The temptation to carve out independent dominions out of the Empire could not be resisted, the rebels found it useful to exploit religious differences. These differences would have persisted in any case, the situation might only have been somewhat aggravated; it certainly was not the outcome of 'Alamgir's measures.

There was hardly any succession to the throne except that of Akbar, which was without contest. The Mughuls had no fixed laws of succession. The absence of any law of succession was a source of strength as well as weakness for the Empire. It was a source of strength in as much as it promoted the survival of the fittest. A war of succession brought to the throne a prince of the calibre of 'Alamgir instead of his eldest brother who was his match neither in wisdom nor in force of character. But every war of succession was also a potential threat to the survival of the dynasty itself. Moreover, every

major struggle for succession left the Empire poorer and weaker as the contending parties squandered the resources of the Empire with an open hand and tried to enlist support by lavish grants and to attract and recruit troops by making advance payments.

'Alamgir had been forced to fight for the throne while his father was alive, but he had trouble from the intrigues and impatient ambitions of his sons without sufficient justification. The best loved of his sons, Prince Akbar, revolted in the midst of the Rajput War and crowned himself Emperor, though unavailingly. His subsequent flight to the Marathas created a most dangerous situation which made it imperative for the Emperor to proceed to the Deccan. One of the considerations that led Prince Sultan Muhammad to rebel against 'Alamgir and join his uncle, Shah Shuja' was the latter's offer of the crown to him in the event of victory.¹ Prince Shah 'Alam's failure in the Deccan was partly due to the fact that his rebellious intentions, reported to 'Alamgir, had to be curbed by the appointment of Dilir Khan, as his lieutenant, whose open defiance of the prince's authority made the viceregal camp in the Deccan like a country torn by civil war.² Ultimately the prince had to be removed from the Deccan. Four years later, in 1687, Shah 'Alam, the eldest surviving son of the Emperor and the intended heir, was imprisoned because of his secret negotiations with Abu-'l Hasan Shah of Golconda. The prince fared better than his elder brother Muhammad Sultan who had died in prison; Shah 'Alam was released after an imprisonment for seven years. Shah 'Alam again incurred suspicion by raising large forces during his governorship of Kabul and had to be sharply reprimanded. In 1692 Prince Kam Bakhsh was arrested by the prime minister for plotting against him. "He

¹ Sarkar, II, 387-88.

² Sarkar, IV, 10.

(Aurangzib) had, at one time or another, to imprison all his five sons except one.”¹

As ‘Alamgir’s end approached, the tension between his sons became acute. Prince A‘zam, the most ambitious among his sons, planned to murder Kam Bakhsh. ‘Alamgir was obliged to appoint special guards to protect Kam Bakhsh’s life and later sent him away from the imperial camp for safety. The ambitious Prince A‘zam was growing impatient and his movements and plans were causing great perturbation in the royal camp. For the safety of the royal camp and for the peace of his last few days, ‘Alamgir sent him away as governor of Malwa. Prince A‘zam had already started intrigues with the prime minister and had secured important allies. He started from the royal camp but moved with extreme slowness, knowing the end of his father was fast approaching. ‘Alamgir had, in vain, advised his sons to avoid civil war. His death was a signal for the inevitable war of succession among “his three surviving sons, each supported by a provincial army and treasury.” Prince Shah ‘Alam emerged victorious. This was the last Mughul war of succession in which the rival princes were real leaders of their respective sides. In the contests for succession that followed, the royal princes were mere puppets and the real leaders of the warring camps were the nobles who fought the battles for their rival ambitions. “During the reigns of Akbar and his successors, down to Aurangzib, sufficient time had elapsed between the accession and demise of the Emperors to enable them to consolidate their position and resolve the alliances of hostile factions. But after Aurangzib rulers rose and fell with such startling rapidity that everyone, from prince to peasant, lost his bearing and balance. Everyone strove only to collect the wreckage; no one

¹ Sarkar, *Studies in Aurangzib’s Reign*, p. 23.

seriously came to save the sinking ship. Nobles formed and reformed alliances for purely selfish ends, the puppet Emperors were too feeble to resist their nefarious activities. The disruption and disintegration caused by successive wars of succession shook the foundations of Mughul sovereignty and completely undermined the prestige of the ruling house.”¹

Every war of succession was an occasion for the lawless and turbulent elements of the population to take the fullest advantage of the situation and to fish in troubled waters. So long as the issue of succession was not decided, no military or civil officer felt sure of his position and, for the time being, his effectiveness in maintaining law and order or collecting revenue or otherwise running the administration was greatly reduced. The cumulative effect of such recurring situations on the prestige and authority of the government can well be imagined.

The north-west frontiers of the Mughul Empire had never been really secure. The danger of encroachment was always lurking, and it was through ceaseless vigilance that Akbar had been able to hold it firmly. The vulnerable points in the mountainous area separating the subcontinent from Central Asia and Persia had to be watched carefully. Akbar had to spend no less than fourteen years at Lahore. “As the master of Kabul, the Mughul Emperor ‘must hold Qandahar or his dominion is unsafe. In an age when Kabul was a part of the Delhi Empire, Qandahar was our indispensable first line of defence.’ Qandahar was also an important trade centre, where merchants from different parts of Asia flocked and exchanged their commodities. Through it goods were carried from India to other Asiatic countries more frequently than before, owing to the Portugese domination of the Red Sea and their

¹ Faruki, pp. 577-78.

hostile relations with Persia.”¹ The loss of Qandahar in the reign of Jahangir and the failure to re-occupy it permanently in the reign of Shah Jahan adversely affected the prestige of the Mughul Empire. Shah Jahan's intervention in Central Asia did not relieve the position. The result was that soon after ‘Alamgir's death, the security of the frontiers was lost. And the insecurity of frontiers naturally reacted unfavourably on the strength of the central authority. ‘Alamgir's campaign in the north-west secured peace; but the weakness of the central government soon reacted unfavourably and the Mughul hold on the frontier became weak.

In the century following ‘Alamgir's death, political frustration and religious indifference created an atmosphere which was not conducive to moral stamina or strength of character. Standards of morality decayed; ugly vices raised their head. This in turn affected the public virtues which are the very foundation of political stability and administrative efficiency. The class which was most affected by moral decay was the ruling class—the court, the princes, the courtiers, the nobles, and the officers—that is, all those who exercised power and influence and had some degree of wealth. But this class, on account of its political influence and material means, also possessed social leadership and its example could not fail to be emulated by others. The virus of moral laxity infected in varying degree the entire society.

There were of course individuals and sections at all levels of society who showed great powers of resistance against this virus and the subsequent revival of the Muslims in the subcontinent can, in part, be attributed to the moral fibre of these God-fearing men. The immediate future, however, was bleak. The moral fibre of the society had deteriorated. This made it

¹ *An Advanced History of India*, p. 454.

impossible for the Muslims to summon those reserves of energy which alone can save a people placed under such circumstances. There was, for them, no escape from the decadence which had sapped their resourcefulness and condemned them to all consequences of political, social and moral deterioration.

CHAPTER III

SUCCESSORS OF 'ALAMGIR

The death of 'Alamgir I under whom the Mughul Empire had attained the climax of its growth and extension marks the beginning of a most important epoch in the history of the subcontinent. The Mughul government was a benevolent monarchy and despite the severe limitations imposed on the powers of the ruler by the constitutional principle of the supremacy of the *Shar'*, the Head of the State played a vital role in the conduct of the administration and the formulation of policy. In fact the final responsibility and ultimate authority vested in the monarch because the ministers were like dignified secretaries¹ whose appointment and dismissal depended upon the will of the ruler. In exceptional cases only could powerful and capable ministers dominate their masters. Under these circumstances to be a successful ruler a monarch had to have a good education and sterling qualities, because he was expected to lead his people both in war and peace.² A weak and indolent prince could retain his throne only as a puppet in the hands of a group or a powerful minister.

The three centuries of Mughul rule in Hind-Pakistan can be divided into two periods of fairly equal duration—the first being marked by the glorious achievements of the Muslims under the leadership of a

¹ For the legal position see al-Mawardi: *Akham-us-Sultaniyah*, section on *wizarat*. In this regard practice conformed to theory.

² Bernier reproduces a conversation between 'Alamgir and his teacher, which throws some light on the nature and variety of subjects that constituted a proper syllabus of studies for a prince. See *Travels in the Mughul Empire* (second edition, 1914), pp. 153-57.

galaxy of remarkable statesmen-rulers for six generations, and the second being characterized by a rapid decline followed by a longdrawn agony preceding the final collapse of the dynasty. There can be no doubt that the weak personalities of the rulers during the second period were to a large extent responsible for the continuous decline and ultimate end of Muslim rule in Hind-Pakistan, but it would be unfair to conclude that they were wholly unconscious of the coming disaster. Historians of the nineteenth century have been most unfair to these rulers in throwing their personalities into complete but undeserved obscurity. An attempt will be made in the following paragraphs to make a brief but objective study of the lives and activities of the successors of 'Alamgir during the first half of the eighteenth century.

'Alamgir died on Friday 23 *Zu'l-Qa'dah*, 1118 (March 3, 1707) in his camp near Ahmadnagar, a few hours after performing his morning prayers,¹ leaving three sons, Mua'zzam, A'zam and Kam Bakhsh. They quarrelled over the question of succession despite their father's wish for a mutual settlement of the problem, because he knew a quarrel was bound to disturb the peace and solidarity of the Empire.²

A war of succession among the sons of a deceased monarch had become almost a regular feature of the dynastic history of the Mughuls. In general usage in every part of the Islamic world a son or a relative of the reigning monarch was raised to the throne; the legal institutions of *bi'at* and *khutbah*, had degenerated into mere formalities. A change in the ruling dynasty could be effected through a revolution only. Nevertheless, in the absence of a rigid law of

¹ *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, II, 549.

² Khafi Khan says: "It is said that a will regarding division among his sons was written by the Emperor and given to Hamid-ud-Din Khan." A document purporting to be the Emperor's will is mentioned in the catalogue of British Museum, Addl. 18, 881.

succession princes of the royal blood often succumbed to the temptation of making a bid for the throne. The rivalries of Babur and Jahangir Mirza, Humayun and Kamran, Akbar and Mirza Hakim, Jahangir and his son, Khusrau, Shahjahan and Khusrau, and 'Alamgir and Dara had left traditions which encouraged Mughul princes to enter the contest for the succession to the throne.

Prince Mu'azzam, the eldest surviving son of 'Alamgir, was in the sixtyfourth year of life at the time of his father's death. He had been thrown into prison for treasonable correspondence with the ruler of Golconda and had remained there till 1695. In 1699 he was at Jamrud, where he had been encamping since November 1706, when the news of 'Alamgir's death was brought to him. Without losing time he set out for Agra, and on the way crowned himself Emperor with the title of Bahadur Shah at the bridge of Shah Daulah, not far from Lahore. He reached Agra on June 12, where the submission of the commandant, Baqi Khan Qul, placed the imperial treasures (two hundred and forty million rupees) at his disposal. His eldest son Prince Mu'izz-ud-din had come from Multan and joined him at Lahore, while his second son 'Azim-ush-Shan who had learnt of his grand-father's death at Shahzadpur on his way to the Deccan, where he had been summoned under imperial orders, had changed his destination and had already arrived with a large army and taken possession of the city of Agra.

Prince A'zam Shah, the second surviving son of 'Alamgir, was twenty *krohs* from Ahmadnagar on his way to Malwa when he heard of his father's death. He immediately returned to the imperial camp, presided over the funeral ceremonies and proclaimed himself Emperor on *Zu'l-Hijjah* 10, (March 14) under the title Abu'l-Fayyaz Qutb-ud-din, Muhammad

A'zam Shah Ghazi. Most of the leading officials and commanders present in the camp offered their support and co-operation but some of them decided to remain neutral. Ghazi-ud-din Firuz Jang, for instance, and his son Chin Qilich Khan evaded taking part in the contest for the throne. At their own request they were posted at Aurangabad and Burhanpur respectively. The prime minister of 'Alamgir, Asad Khan,¹ and his son Zu'l-Fiqar Khan² who had distinguished himself by capturing the Maratha stronghold of Jinji (1698), were the two leading figures of the imperial court. They were both with A'zam.

A'zam's under-estimation of his elder brother's strength had from the outset created a feeling of over-complacency, which, combined with his policy of ignoring the leading courtiers of 'Alamgir, alienated some of the influential nobles.' However, he left for the north and continued his march until he reached Gwalior where a message was received from his eldest son, Bidar Bakht (who had arrived there from Ahmadabad under his instructions), that Mu'azzam had entered the city of Agra and that his son 'Azim had seized the fort and occupied the fords over the Chambal. In reply he told his son to wait for him in Gwalior. This was a tactical blunder, because Mu'azzam was thus allowed to add to his resources and prestige by capturing Agra and Delhi along with their treasures. Mu'azzam, however, wanted to avoid bloodshed. He sent a letter to his brother from Muttra which

¹ For his biography see *Ma'asir-ul-Umara*, I, 310 *et seq.*

² *Ibid.*, II, 93.

³ Muhammad Amin Khan, for instance, left the army at Daudnagar and returned to Burhanpur. In reply to offers made by some of his followers to bring him back, A'zam said: "He who is coming, let him come, and he who is not coming let him stay away, our trust is in the Master and not in his slaves." (Khushhal Chand as quoted by Irvine, I, 13n). A'zam was suspected of Shi'ah leanings and the Sunni nobles were not enthusiastic about his cause. In fact the Turani-Irani (Sunni-Shi'ah) rivalry, which later on became a potent cause of the weakening of the Empire, was now gaining strength.

contained peace proposals on the lines of the contents of 'Alamgir's will.¹ He concluded it by adding that if fighting was unavoidable it would be better for them to decide the issue through a single combat between themselves. A'zam spurned the offer reminding him of Sa'di's famous dictum that "ten beggars could sleep in a blanket, but two kings could not be accommodated in one realm."

By the middle of June the two armies found themselves near each other in the neighbourhood of Jajau, not far from Samugarh. The decisive action was fought on June 18 when the advance-guards of the two forces, commanded by 'Azim-ush-Shan and Bidar Bakht, came to battle unexpectedly. Bidar Bakht, who was marching three miles ahead of his father, sighted the advance-guard of Mu'azzam under 'Azim-ush-Shan pitching the tents for the main army. His men attacked the camp, drove out the guards and burnt the tents. 'Azim however remained firm and sent word to his father who had gone out hunting. On receiving the report of the skirmish, Mu'azzam hastened back and joined his son in time to give him the much needed help. Bidar, too, had sent the historian Iradat Khan to his father, who was excited at the news and riding his war-elephant cried out: "Be not afraid ! I am coming to my son." By the time however that Iradat Khan returned to Bidar the enemy had already started cannonading his forces, which wrought havoc in their ranks. These hardships were further intensified by excessive heat and a storm of dust blown into the faces of his soldiers by the hot winds.² Several of his trusted commandants were killed, Jay Singh of Amber went over to Bahadur Shah, while Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan

¹ *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, II, 584-85.

² Khafi Khan (II, 590) refers to the heat of the day in these words: Some writers say that the winds were so strong that the arrows and bullets shot by A'zam's side were diverted from the right direction. Yahya (113b), quoted by Irvine, I, 31.

and the Rajputs deserted the field of battle when they were most needed. But Bidar stuck to his position till the last moment, when a ball from a swivel-gun (*jazari*) struck him dead.¹ His brother, Walah Jah, also received a wound and collapsed on account of excessive loss of blood. It was late in the day when A'zam joined the battle in person. Though severely wounded he drove his elephant into the thick of the battle amidst a shower of arrows and continued to fight till about an hour before sunset, when he was struck in the forehead by a musket ball and fell dead. This caused panic among his followers who made off towards Gwalior. Many were killed on the way by Jat marauders. There can be little doubt that A'zam Shah's under-estimation of his brother's strength and his failure to appreciate the true state of affairs were the main causes of his defeat and death. His resources compared to those of Bahadur Shah were meagre. The latter's hold over the capital cities of Delhi and Agra had added considerably to his prestige and influence and placed in his hands the accumulated treasures of the Empire.² A great blunder committed by A'zam was that he had left much of his equipage and artillery in the Deccan. Not the least important of the causes of his failure was the half-hearted support of many of his chief commanders.

Bahadur Shah having spent the night on the field of battle returned next morning to *Bagh-i-Dahr-Ara* where he had been staying, and held public audience to receive felicitations for his victory. Mun'im Khan became the *wazir*. The Emperor honoured him by a visit and conferred upon him the title of *Khan Khanan Bahadur Zafar Jang* and a *mansab* of seven thousand. His

¹ Iradat, 38; Kamraj, 28; Qasim, 14; Khushhal, 371 (quoted by Irvine).

² In spite of 'Alamgir's wars in the Deccan the treasury in Agra contained savings in cash worth 24 crores of rupees. K. K., II, 578.

two sons received the titles of *Mahabat Khan Bahadur* and *Khan Zaman*. Besides his own supporters, Bahadur Shah who was anxious to follow a policy of peace invited the leading figures of the other camp to join him. Asad Khan who arrived from Gwalior was made *wakil-i-mutlaq*, but, in spite of a written request, he was not given all the powers that Asaf Khan had enjoyed in that capacity under Shah Jahan and had to share his responsibilities and powers with the *wazir*, Mun'im Khan. The latter too was not prepared to work in subordination to the *wakil-i-mutlaq* and was allowed under the pretext of old age to remain in Delhi. His son Zu-'l-Fiqar was to stay at the court as his deputy. Both the father and the son, however, received higher titles and ranks; Mun'im Khan became *Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf-ud-daulah* while his son was made *Samsam-ud-daulah*, *Amir-ul-Umara Bahadur Nusrat Jang*. The treatment meted out to the Truani nobles was different, although they too had received invitations from the new Emperor. They could neither be given responsible offices at the court, nor left in the Deccan where they commanded influence. Ghazi-ud-din was transferred to Ahmadabad, his son Chin Qilich Khan (now *Khan Dauran Bahadur*) was made *subahdar* of Oudh and his nephew Muhammad Amin Khan was sent as *faujdar* of Moradabad.

Kam Bakhsh, the youngest of 'Alamgir's sons had been appointed to the government of Bijapur. He was on his way when he heard at Parenda of the death of his father. The news created confusion among his followers and Amin Khan the most influential of the Turani nobles deserted him to join A'zam Shah. Nevertheless he crowned himself as Emperor at Bijapur, assuming the title of *Din-panah*.¹ Ahsan Khan was

¹ The superscription on his coins was:

در دکن زد سکه برخو رشید و ماه پادشاه کام بخش دین پناه

made *bakhshi* and Hakim Muhsin became the chief minister with the title of *Taqarrub Khan*. Having settled the affairs in Bijapur, Kam Bakhsh reconquered some important places, including the fort of Wakin-Khera which had been conquered by the Mughuls in 1705, but had been reoccupied by its chief, Piriya Nayak, on the death of 'Alamgir.¹ Soon after this, however, Kam Bakhsh began to indulge in deeds of cruelty which made him an object of disgust and resulted in the desertion of his followers. On receiving reports of these developments in the Deccan, Bahadur Shah had to interrupt his campaign in Rajputana and march southwards. As he came nearer the scene, the deserters from Kam Bakhsh's camp began to come to him in numbers until it was stated by Sayyid Ghazanfar who had lately come from there that his forces had been reduced to about 2500 horse and 5000 foot soldiers. But in spite of these desertions Kam Bakhsh, who had already rejected Bahadur Shah's offers for peace by sending an evasive reply,² refused to listen to the advice of his well-wishers. Bahadur Shah was thus compelled to move forward and fight out the battle which he had done so much to avoid. On the morning of January 13, 1709 Kam Bakhsh's tiny force of about 500 men was attacked from Hyderabad. Kam Bakhsh fought like Rustam, to use Khafi Khan's phrase, but the result of the contest could not be in doubt. He was severely wounded and captured, and a number of his devoted adherents fell on the field of battle. Khafi Khan was present at the battle and counted sixty-two men who had been killed on the side of

¹ For the treacherous and tortuous conduct of Piriya Nayak and his predecessor see K.K.II, 369-370, 524-34. Sarkar's account in *Cambridge History of India* (IV, 298-99) of the submission of Piriya Nayak has to be supplemented by details given by Khafi Khan. The latter says the Nayak belonged to the caste *Dher*, which is considered to be the most untouchable of all castes in the Deccan.

² This letter was despatched by Bahadur Shah when he was in Rajputana. K. K. II, 608.

Kam Bakhsh and most of whom lay near his elephant.¹ In the afternoon Bahadur Shah received the wounded Kam Bakhsh and said rather feelingly : "I had no desire to see you reduced to this state." Kam Bakhsh replied, "I, too, did not want to be arrested in a manner which would bring dishonour to the House of Timur."²

'Alamgir's absence from the north had given the Rajput chiefs an opportunity to ripen their schemes of weakening the hold of the imperial government on their territories. In 1707 the state of Amber (Jaipur) was held by Jay Singh, a grandson of the famous Mirza Raja Jay Singh. The young prince had supported the cause of A'zam Shah. The Rathor chief, Ajit Singh, the reputed posthumous son of Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur, had remained in hiding since 'Alamgir's suppression of the Rajput revolt.³ All along he had been trying to create trouble but on hearing the news of 'Alamgir's death he intensified his rebellious activities; Muslims were harassed, cow-slaughter prohibited, *azan* forbidden and mosques were demolished. Udaipur's attitude had been different. Amar Singh was anxious to avert the threatened blow by sending his brother Bakht Singh to Agra, and he was received in audience soon after the battle of Jajau.

Bahadur Shah left for Rajputana about the middle of November. His march was interrupted by a forced halt at Bhasawar for about a month owing to *Ramazan*. The *faujdar* of Jodhpur, Mihrab Khan, was however sent in advance to seize the town. Bahadur Shah reached Amber on January 20, 1708. Jay Singh was pardoned, but the title of *Mirza Raja* with the ancestral chieftainship was conferred on his brother (April 30, 1708).⁴

¹ K. K. II, 624.

² *Ibid.*, p. 625.

³ Khafi Khan calls him *ptsar-i-majhul-un-nasab* of Jaswant Singh (Vol. II, p. 605).

⁴ *Bahadur-Shah-Namah* (62-64), quoted by Irvine, I, 47.

In the meantime Ajit Singh having been defeated by Mihrab Khan offered his submission. He presented himself before the Emperor in full humiliation with his hands bound by a kerchief. In spite of his unruly conduct and continuous misbehaviour the peace-loving Bahadur conferred upon him the title of *Maharaja* and a *mansab* of 3500 *zat* and 3000 *sawar*.

The third state, Udaipur, submitted without resistance. Rana Amar Singh, terrified at the news that Bahadur was marching on Ajmer, had fled from his capital. But on receiving a reassuring message and a jewelled dagger from the Emperor through his brother, the raja offered his submission and sent presents. It was, however, soon reported that he had again fled into the hills and was not willing to come in person to pay homage.¹ It was at this stage that Bahadur Shah had to leave for the Deccan rather abruptly.

Bahadur Shah wasted no time after his victory over Kam Bakhsh, but it was not before December 25, 1709 that he could cross the Narbada. During his absence of more than a year the conditions in Rajputana underwent a great change. The three Rajput chiefs made common cause and ousted the Mughul *faujdar*s. Bahadur Shah, however, wisely adopted a attitude and through the intercession of prince 'Azim-ush-Shan the Rajput chiefs were pardoned for their past conduct and their ranks and positions were restored. When negotiations with the Rajputs were still in progress, a report was received of the Sikh revolt in the Panjab under Banda, the successor of Govind Singh. The Emperor therefore decided to conclude a hasty peace with the Rajput princes. Jay Singh and Ajit Singh were received on June 21, 1710. They were invested with *khil'ats*, were given jewelled swords and daggers and other presents

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

and allowed to go to their homes. On the following day Bahadur Shah entered Ajmer.

The history of the Sikhs and their revolts against the government has been dealt with elsewhere.¹ Bahadur Shah's campaign against the Sikhs kept him engaged for more than a year and it was not before August 1711 that he could reach Lahore. His old adviser and minister Mun'im Khan² died on the way. Sa'dullah Khan was appointed *diwan*, but the real authority was in the hands of prince 'Azim-ush-Shan.

Bahadur Shah had the reputation of having inclinations towards the Shi'ah creed. This impression was strengthened by his orders to use the epithet *Wasi-i-Mustafa* for Hazrat 'Ali in the *khutbah*. Objections were raised and the *khutbah* could not be delivered in Lahore for some time. The Emperor called some of the learned doctors for advice. They convinced him of the dangers of enforcing the order. Hence he issued fresh orders that the expressions used in the time of 'Alamgir should be continued. A few months later the Emperor whose health had been deteriorating for some time died on the night of February 27, 1712.³

Bahadur Shah had received a good education as well as good training both in war and administration during the long reign of his father. He was mild and generous and possessed great dignity of behaviour. Pious and by temperament a lover of peace he was faced with problems of a very complicated nature. He had to fight for the throne, against both of his surviving brothers, but in either case he tried to avoid war and resorted to it only when there was no other option. His

¹ Chapter V.

² He had inclinations towards *sufism* and is said to have compiled a short book, named *Ithamat-i-Mun'imi*, which has been mentioned by Shah Nawaz Khan but not in commendable terms. (*Ma'asir-ul-Umara*, III, 675).

³ 19 Muharram, 1122 A.H. (*Siyar*, II, 8). According to Yahya, Bahadur had a *dumbal-i-ma'kus* on his stomach. His mind seems to have become affected for he issued strange orders, one being that the dogs, wherever seen, should be killed.

father had bequeathed to him one of the biggest and mightiest empires known to history, but the realm which he inherited was disturbed. 'Alamgir's absence from the north had given the Jats, the Rajputs and the Sikhs an opportunity to increase their strength and create disorder. Bahadur Shah was fully conscious of the delicacy of the situation and knew that a continuation of the war would be injurious to the Empire. He based his policy, therefore, on the principles of conciliation and compromise. This did not mean that he shirked fighting, but he fought only when fighting was inevitable. Besides the war of succession he had to lead a campaign against the recalcitrant chiefs of Rajputana and took about a year in punishing the Sikhs and suppressing their lawlessness in the Panjab. This was not a mean record of fighting for a short reign of five years. He had ascended the throne at an advanced age and yet he contended with the forces arrayed against him with vigour and energy. It would be unfair to count him among the weaklings who came after him: if only he had been given more time he might have arrested the decline of the Empire.

All the four sons of Bahadur Shah were with him at time of his death. Prince 'Azim-ush-Shan, the ablest and strongest in resources and influence, was the common object of suspicion of the remaining three brothers. These latter were brought together by Zu'l-Fiqar Khan and they entered into an agreement. Jahandar Shah was to be proclaimed Emperor and the *khutbah* and coinage were to be issued in his name; Kabul, Kashmir, Multan, Thatta and Bhakkar were to be given to Rafi'-ush-Shan and the Deccan to Jahan Shah.¹ Zu'l-Fiqar Khan was to be the prime minister of all the three. 'Azim-ush-Shan had seized control of the imperial camp but strangely enough he took up "the

¹ Irvine, I, 161.

attitude of a helpless waiter on events," and thus allowed his camp to be surrounded by his rivals. The battle lasted three days (March 15 to 17) and ended in his defeat. His elephant, frightened by gun-shot, threw itself into the river and the rider and the beast were both swallowed up by quick-sands.¹ The alliance between the victorious brothers was short-lived. They quarrelled among themselves and ultimately Jahandar having defeated and killed his brothers ascended the throne of his father on March 29, 1712. A month later he left for Delhi where, due to his infatuation for a low-born woman, Lal Kumari, he began to behave in a shameful manner. He was soon punished for his misdeeds and his life and reign were cut short by the successful revolt of his nephew, Farrukh Siyar, who was the deputy of his father ('Azim-ush-Shan) in the government of Bengal. The news of Farukh Siyar's preparations for seizing the throne had reached Jahandar on his way to Delhi. At first he ridiculed the idea, but on arriving at the capital he became more realistic and despatched a strong force under the nominal command of his second son 'Izz-ud-din.

Farrukh Siyar had proclaimed himself Emperor at Patna. He left there on September 18 with 25000 men to meet the much larger army of Jahandar at Khajwah where his cousin had taken up an entrenched position. But 'Izz-ud-din fled away (November 28) on hearing of the arrival of Farrukh Siyar, leaving his treasures and camp to be plundered by his soldiers. Jahandar now proceeded to Agra himself and encamped near Samugarh. Farrukh Siyar marched forward, crossed

¹ Khafi Khan says that 'Azim-ush-Shan had set up his camp near the village of Budhana, three or four *krohs* from the city. According to him there were two versions current as regards the end of the Prince. It was believed that he had fled either as the result of a cannon shot, or, finding himself hopelessly besieged by the enemy, left the battle and thrown himself into the river (II, 686). The author of the *Siyar-ul-Muta'akhkhirin* (II, 10) seems to have followed Khafi Khan. Kamwar and Yahya say that the corpse of 'Azim-ush-Shan was later discovered and sent to Aurangabad for burial by Farrukh Siyar.

the Jumna on January 8, 1713, and two days later gave battle to the army of his uncle outside the walls of Agra. Fighting had begun late in the afternoon and lasted till night-fall, when Jahandar, finding his cause to be hopeless left the field in the *howdah* of his favourite mistress Lal Kumari. Shaving his beard and moustache and disguising himself as a poor man he travelled with her in a bullock-cart, entering Delhi on January 15. For more than three weeks he tried to persuade Asad Khan and his son Zu-'l-Fiqar to give him protection. The old Minister realizing that his cause was doomed managed to have him arrested and thrown into prison. Asad Khan then sent a message to Farrukh Siyar offering submission on behalf of himself and his son, Zu-'l-Fiqar, and informing him that he had imprisoned his old master.

Farrukh Siyar reached Khizrabad (about five miles from Delhi) on February 10 and remained there till the 12th. It was here that Zu-'l-Fiqar and Asad Khan were brought before him. Their properties were confiscated, and Zu-'l-Fiqar was strangled to death on February 11. Asad Khan was allowed to linger on as a miserable wretch till his death in 1716.¹ Jahandar Shah was also killed on the same day. On the following morning Farrukh Siyar entered Delhi in state.

With the advent of weak rulers the tendencies of powerful courtiers to strengthen their groups and thereby tighten their hold on the reigning monarch naturally became stronger. These trends could be clearly noticed in the time of Bahadur Shah, but under Farrukh Siyar they became a prominent feature of Mughul political life and contributed more than any other single factor to the disintegration of the Empire. Besides political rivalry, racial and sectarian differences

¹ According to Khafi Khan (II, 728) and the author of the *Ma'asir-ul-Umara* (I, 318) Farrukh Siyar had encamped near Barah-pulah which is only two miles from Delhi. See also *Siyar*, II, 19. Kamwar Khan and Ijad say Khizrabad.

also played a vital role in accentuating the factious quarrels. It is a wellknown fact that since the establishment of Muslim supremacy in the subcontinent foreigners—mostly from Iran and Central Asia—had been coming here in considerable numbers. After the establishment of the Mughul rule the Turanis (Central Asian Turks or Mughuls) had begun to migrate on a large scale. During the last quarter of the seventeenth century 'Alamgir's wars in the Deccan encouraged this influx and naturally led to the growth of their influence. From Iran too some distinguished families had come and settled in this land. The Iranis were not as numerous as the Turanis but some of them had attained positions of great responsibility. These two groups formed two opposite camps. The Afghans, mostly from the region lying immediately beyond the Indus, had also come in large numbers and established their settlements in the Indo-Gangetic valley. They, however, played no important part in the political history of the period until the establishment of Rohilla power in the north. The nobles of Indian birth sided with one or the other of the opposing factions. The political and racial rivalry of the Irani and Turani nobles was further intensified by sectarian differences; the former were Shi'ahs while the latter were mostly Sunnis. The quarrels of these groups led by capable but irresponsible aristocrats brought about a speedy disintegration of the Empire. Within twenty years of 'Alamgir's death semi-independent states were set up by two of the leading courtiers of the Emperor in Hyderabad and Oudh. This tendency towards disintegration made the centre so weak that it could neither resist the growth and expansion of the power of the Marathas nor successfully check the invaders from the north. In short the government failed to perform its primary duty of maintaining peace and protecting the people from external dangers. The Emperors who were in

most cases men of weak personalities were demoralized and became puppets in the hands of one group or the other. Thus, instead of arresting the growth of disruptive forces, they encouraged them and became the victims of their weakness and incompetence.

Farrukh Siyar had gained the throne with the help of the Sayyid brothers. Naturally they rose to positions of influence : 'Abdullah became *Qutb-ul-Mulk Zafar Jang Sipah Salar* and was given the office of the *wazir*, while Husain 'Ali was made *bakhshi* and given the title of *Amir-ul-Umara Firuz Jang*. Of the other favourites who rose to prominence Mir Jumlah had great influence on the Emperor. He continuously tried to poison the ears of Farrukh Siyar against the Sayyids until the Emperor became suspicious of their activities. They too gave up attending the court. But Farrukh Siyar was too weak to take any drastic step.

In January 1714 Husain 'Ali marched against Ajit Singh who had started to behave rebelliously. He had expelled the Imperial officers from Jodhpur, stopped cow-slaughter and forbade *azan* in his territories. He was however terrified on hearing of the successful advance of the Mughuls, who had pacified the conquered territories and despite the approach of the hot weather seemed to be determined on continuing the campaign and capturing Jodhpur. Ajit had no option but to surrender and accept the terms of the conquerors. He was to give his daughter in marriage to the Emperor, send his son Abhay Singh to the court and was to serve in the imperial army whenever summoned to do so.

In the absence of Husain 'Ali his brother lost much of his influence and plans had ripened to overthrow their power. Mir Jumlah was now the *de facto* minister. His chief companion was Khan Dauran. Both were given *mansabs* of seven thousand and Mir Jumlah was

permitted to maintain 6000 horsemen who were paid by the Imperial treasury. The position of the Sayyids had become so precarious that they offered to resign their offices and requested the Emperor to allow them to retire from service. Farrukh Siyar was too timid to take advantage of the proffered resignation. He started negotiations and it was agreed that Mir Jumlah should be sent to Patna and Husain 'Ali should go to the Deccan as a viceroy with extensive powers of appointment and dismissal.

In spite of a formal reconciliation the relations between the Emperor and the Sayyids continued to deteriorate. Farrukh Siyar's policy to raise rivals to the two brothers adversely affected the machinery of the central government, with the natural result that provinces were neglected and the energies of leading politicians and administrators at the court were wasted in intrigues and plots.

Another person who was raised to prominence was 'Inayat-ullah Kashmiri who had been disgraced at the beginning of the reign. In April 1717 he was placed in charge of the revenue administration.¹ He tried to reform the administration and restore the efficiency of 'Alamgir's time. He re-imposed the *jizyah* which had been abolished by Farrukh Siyar soon after his accession in 1713, and tried to reduce the assignments which many an official had secured through fraud. This brought him into clash with Sayyid 'Abdullah who, instigated by his evil genius, Ratan Chand, opposed the reforms and shielded the revenue officers who were guilty of misappropriation.

In the meantime Husain 'Ali was summoned to the capital by his brother. He arrived with an army of

¹ *Ma'asir-ul-Umarā*, II, 828 ; K. K., II, 773-75.

25000 cavalry¹ and 10000 musketeers, accompanied by 11000 Marathas under the Peshwa Balaji Vishvanath Rao. The Sayyid had secured his help at a very heavy cost ; he had promised the Marathas *chauth* on the revenue of the Deccan, *sardesh-mukhi* or an additional ten per cent. on these collections, and a cash salary at the rate of one rupee a day for each Maratha soldier. Far more harmful than these monetary concessions was the opportunity that he had given to the traditional enemies of the Mughuls to interfere in the affairs of the central government and thus obtain first hand knowledge of the state of affairs at the court. It was a foolish step fraught with dangerous consequences. The Marathas could now see that Delhi provided an excellent market for mercenaries. The selfish politicians at the court purchased their support with heavy concessions in the form of cession of large territories or a right to levy *chauth* on the imperial provinces. Little did Husain realize that by initiating this policy he was throwing open a path which would ultimately lead to the complete domination of the Emperor and his court by the Marathas.

The report that Husain 'Ali was on his way to the capital unnerved the Emperor. He tried to conciliate the Sayyid brothers and is said to have gone to the extent of placing his turban on Husain 'Ali's head when he had his first interview with him. Husain 'Ali was warned by his spies that the Emperor was not sincere in his professions of friendship and that he was plotting against his life. The Sayyids therefore decided to take strong measures.

On the morning of February 27, Sayyid 'Abdullah

¹ Having decided to reach the capital in time to help his brother, Husain 'Ali wrote to the Emperor that he wanted to come to Delhi for a change of climate and also because he wanted to bring with him the son of prince Akbar, who had fallen into the hands of Shahu and was surrendered by him on the condition that the Emperor would release the wife of Shambhaji. This was obviously a ruse which he had adopted to deceive the Emperor. The latter permitted him to come to the court. See *Siyar*/II, 35.

entered the palace with his followers and took possession of the gates and other points of vantage. A few hours later he was followed by Husain 'Ali who came at the head of thirty to forty thousand men and a strong park of artillery. The Maratha force of mercenaries was drawn up at the gates of the palace and the adjoining part of the city. The Emperor having failed to conciliate the Sayyids tried as a last resort to make his escape with the help of Ajit Singh. The latter, however, replied that the proper time had gone by and sent the Emperor's note to 'Abdullah who had already taken such effective steps to guard the palace "that not even the gentle breeze could find a way into or out of the fort." On the following day shortly after dawn the Mughul retainers of Muhammad Amin Khan fell out with the Marathas and killed them in large numbers.¹ These disturbances threw the city into a state of confusion which was further increased by all sorts of wild rumours. Farrukh Siyar had hidden himself in the women's apartments and would not come out. The Sayyids now decided to depose him and place on the throne a prince of their own choice. Rafi'-ud-Darajat, son of Rafi'-ush-Shan, was brought out of the harem, seated upon the Peacock Throne and proclaimed Emperor. Soon afterwards Farrukh Siyar was dragged out of his room and presented in a wretched condition before the cruel Sayyid who ordered him to be thrown on the ground and blinded. He passed the remaining two months of his life in imprisonment where he was later strangled to death on April 27.

Irvine's remark that Farrukh Siyar was "strong neither for evil nor for good" is not incorrect but one can hardly agree with him in holding him entirely responsible for "the fate which finally overtook him." The timidity and cowardice exhibited by him in his dealings with the Sayyid brothers seem to be inconsistent

¹ Fifteen hundred, according to Khafi Khan, who was an eye-witness.

with his passion for manly sports like wrestling, archery, horsemanship and polo.

Intelligent, brave and capable, the Sayyid brothers wasted their talent and energy on petty feuds and personal aggrandisement and followed a policy which undermined the very foundations of the Empire. Instead of utilizing their extensive influence and resources to check the process of disintegration they encouraged and intensified factionalism, used the Marathas for their party interests and weakened the position of the Emperor, whom tradition and history had made the symbol of unity and strength.

Prince Rafi'-ud-Darajat whom the Sayyids had placed upon the throne was an intelligent but sickly youth of twenty. He was deposed on June 4, 1719 and was replaced by his elder brother Rafi'-ud-Daulah who was also a virtual prisoner like his predecessor. Sickly and consumptive, he did not survive an attack of diarrhoea and died on September 17. The only incident worth mentioning during these two reigns was the proclamation of Niku-Siyar (a son of prince Akbar) as Emperor at Agra by an influential Brahmin, Mitra Sen. Husain 'Ali marched on the city and captured it after a regular siege which lasted over a month. Niku-Siyar was thrown into prison while Mitra Sen committed suicide.

On the death of Rafi'-ud-Daulah the Sayyids placed upon the throne Prince Raushan Akhtar, a grandson of Bahadur Shah. The new Emperor, who assumed the title of Muhammad Shah, was an intelligent and handsome youth of twenty. He was stronger and more capable than his immediate predecessors, but their misrule had given rise to evils which it was not easy to eradicate. The Sayyids were now all powerful at court, but they continued their old and short-sighted policy and wanted to keep the new Emperor, like his two

predecessors, as a mere puppet in their hands. Muhammad Shah, quite naturally resented this and used against them their own weapons of treachery and intrigue. Nizam-ul-Mulk, who had been insulted by being removed from the governership of the Deccan, which was to be placed in charge of Husain 'Ali, was the most influential leader of the anti-Sayyid group. He was now in Malwa, and according to reports received at court, was enlisting men and collecting material of war far in excess of his requirements. When asked to explain his conduct he stated that if he had any evil intentions, he would have created trouble at the time of Niku-Siyar's rebellion. This reference greatly annoyed the Sayyids and a *farman* was issued recalling him from Malwa. Nizam-ul-Mulk's suspicions were strengthened by a private letter from his cousin, Muhammad Amin Khan, sent with another in the Emperor's own handwriting, complaining of the usurpation of all authority by the Sayyids.¹ Promptly deciding upon his course of action, he moved his forces immediately and crossed the Narbada on May 9, to attack Khandesh. Having taken possession of Asirgarh and Burhanpur he turned towards the north and defeated Dilawar, who had been sent against him, in the Battle of Khandwa. A contingent despatched by him from there successfully arrested the progress of another army which had come from the south. These victories dismayed the Sayyids who attempted a reconciliation by offering him the viceroyalty of the Deccan. The Nizam took these offers at their true value. He sent courteous but lengthy replies both to the Emperor and the Sayyids, emphasizing his loyalty to the former and friendship to the latter.

Nevertheless the inevitable clash could not be postponed for long. It was decided that the Emperor accompanied by Husain 'Ali should march against

¹ K. K. II, 852.

Nizam-ul-Mulk. Most of the leading nobles had by now begun to hate the domination of the Sayyids and it was not difficult for the Emperor to win over influential leaders like Muhammad Amin Khan Turani and Sa'adat Khan, the future Nawab of Oudh. When the army was encamping at Toda Bhim,¹ Haidar Quli Khan, who was one of the main conspirators and enjoyed the confidence of the Sayyids, approached Husain 'Ali's palanquin on the pretext of submitting a petition. As the Sayyid began to read the document Haidar thrust a dagger into his side and dragged him out of the palanquin. He wanted to cut off his head when Nur-ullah, a young cousin of Husain 'Ali, rushed to the spot and slew him. Nur-ullah too in his turn was killed by the Turanis. Husain 'Ali's head was taken by Muhammad Amin Khan to the Emperor's tent. Ratan Chand who was soon seized and imprisoned had managed to send on to 'Abdullah a scrap of paper containing the news of his brother's murder.²

Muhammad Shah hurried back to the north to deal with 'Abdullah, who had in the meantime collected an army and crowned Ibrahim, a brother of Rafi'-ud-Darajat, as Emperor at Delhi. The imperial army reached Hasanpur, about 50 miles south of Delhi on November 14, and met 'Abdullah Khan's forces on the following day. The Sayyid's followers fought bravely but they were defeated and many of them were slain. 'Abdullah Khan was captured alive and thrown into prison. Ratan Chand was beheaded, but Ibrahim being a mere pawn in the hands of the Sayyids was received with kindness and forgiven.³

Muhammad Amin Khan who had been appointed *wazir* died of colic (January 30, 1721). Pending the arrival of Nizam-ul-Mulk this office was given

¹ Toda Bhim: *Vide* Blochmann, *Ain-i-Akbari* (Eng. tr.) III, 181.

² *C.H.I.* IV, 344.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

temporarily to 'Inayat-ullah Kashmiri, while the title of *I'timad-ud-Daulah* was conferred on Qamar-ud-din Khan. Nizam-ul-Mulk arrived in January 1722, and was formally appointed *wazir* on February 21.

Ajit was a partisan of the Sayyids and had been appointed by them as the governor of Gujarat and Ajmer, but he was so unpopular and feelings against his misrule were so strong that his deputy was expelled from Gujarat. About his maltreatment of the Muslims at Ajmer Todd reports: "He drove the Mooslem from Ajmer and made it his own. He slew the king's governor and seized on Tarragurh. Once more the bell of prayers was heard in the temple, while the *bang* of Masjid was silent. Where the Koran was read, the *Puran* was now heard, and the Mindra took the place of Mosque. The Kazi made way for the Brahmin, and the pit of burnt sacrifice (*home*) was dug where the sacred kine were slain.....He coined in his own name, established his own *guz* (measure) and *seer* (weight), his own courts of justice, and a new scale of ranks for his chiefs, with *nalkees* and mace-bearers, *nobuts* and standards, and every emblem of sovereign rule."¹

Muzaffar 'Ali Khan who had been appointed governor of Ajmer had proceeded as far as Manauharpur.² Here he had to face hardship, because all his funds were exhausted and the soldiers were clamouring for the payment of their arrears. Unable to control the situation he fled and retired from service. With the appointment of Nizam-ul-Mulk as minister the situation at court began to improve. Ajit also thought it wise to change his attitude.

He was forgiven and confirmed in the government of Ajmer. But even before a year had passed after this submission he again behaved treacherously and

¹ *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (Popular Edition), II, 69.

² Not far from Jaipur.

assassinated Nahar Khan when the latter was on his way to take charge of the *diwani* of Ajmer. Sharaf-ud-Daulah Iradatmand Khan was ordered to march against him. Haidar Quli who had only recently returned from Gujarat was appointed to the government of Ajmer and joined him at Narnol. In the face of a full fledged campaign Ajit became unnerved. Without offering any resistance he fled to Sambhar and, when pursued thither, left it for Jodhpur. Haidar Quli entered Ajmer (June 8, 1723) and sent a report of his victories to the court. Ajit had now no course left to him other than submission. He sent his son Abhay Singh to the court. The government of Ajmer was entrusted to Sayyid Husain 'Ali Khan Barha (April 1725).

In June 1724 Ajit's life was cut short by his own son. Todd, in his uncritical and partial manner, gives a totally wrong account.¹ The true version is given by Kamwar Khan. He says that on returning to Jodhpur, Ajit Singh "fell in love with the wife of his middle son Bakht Singh and was guilty of an incestuous intercourse."² Overcome with anger and shame Bakht Singh avenged the grievous injury done to his honour by killing his father.. Again, Todd's praises for Ajit's virtues are entirely based on legendary accounts and have nothing to do with sober history. Ajit's career shows that he "was exceedingly wanting in good faith, a breaker of his oath, one who had slain many of his relations and dependents."³

The comparatively long period of Muhammad Shah's reign witnessed the disintegration of the Mughul power

¹ According to him the Sayyids instigated the murder by telling Abhay that the ruin of Marwar could be averted by "his own elevation, and his subservience to their views which object could only be obtained by his father's disposal and death." (*Annals*, I, 384). The hollowness of Todd's version is proved by the fact that Ajit's murder took place three years after the death of the Sayyid brothers.

The actual act of murder was committed by Abhay Singh's brother, Bakht Singh.

² Irvine: *Later Mughals*, II, 116-17.

³ *Ibid.*, 117.

and the rise of semi-independent states in the various provinces of the Empire. The detailed stories of their origin and early history have been told elsewhere in this volume.¹

In the reign of Farrukh Siyar, Churaman, the Jat chief who had been given an assignment by Bahadur Shah, began highway robberies. Raja Jay Singh who was sent against him besieged his fort at Thun (1716). Ultimately he was granted peace in return for a promise to pay a tribute of five million rupees. But it was not long before he began to misbehave again. In the battle of Hasanpur he plundered the camps of both armies and subsequently threw off the pretence of allegiance to the Emperor. Burhan-ul-Mulk Sa'adat Khan, the new governor of Agra, ordered his deputy, Nilkanth, to punish the Jats. He was however killed in battle by Churaman's son, Muhkam Singh. Sa'adat Khan came to Agra in person but was unable to subdue the rebels. He was, therefore, replaced by Jay Singh² who marched against the rebels and laid siege to their stronghold. Churaman had died³ and the Jats were now led by Muhkam Singh. Jay Singh pressed the siege with such vigour that the Jat leader was compelled to take to flight. He went to Rajputana and took refuge with Ajit Singh of Jodhpur. The imperial forces entered the fort of Thun on November 18, 1722. Badan Singh was recognized as the chief of the Jats.⁴

An Afghan soldier of fortune, Muhammad Khan Bangash would have certainly risen to the position of a semi-independent ruler had circumstances been as favourable as they were in the case of Oudh or Hyderabad. He was appointed governor of Allahabad in 1725, and was soon after commissioned to suppress the rebellious

¹ Chapters VII and VIII.

² The Jat territory lay between Jay Singh's capital and Agra.

³ Churaman committed suicide. Irving: II, 122

⁴ K. K. II, 945.

Bundelahs. Having subdued them he decided to stay in their territory for some time, retaining with him only a tiny band of his followers and allowing the bulk of his forces to go on leave. The Bundelahs acted treacherously and joined the Marathas who entered Bundelkhand early in 1729. Muhammad Khan was forced to take shelter in the fort of Jaitgarh where he remained besieged for about three months. His appeals to the central government to send reinforcements proved of no avail. His son Qa'im Khan, however, managed to collect a few thousand Afghans and came to his relief in August 1729. In spite of this relief he had to give an undertaking to his enemies that he would never again enter Bundelkhand territory. The failure of Muhammad Khan's campaign, coming as it did only a few years after the establishment of the semi-independent States of Oudh and Hyderabad, was another symptom indicative of the process of disintegration through which the Empire was now passing.

It was during this period of decline and disorder that Nadir Shah's invasion came as a severe blow to the integrity of the Mughul government. The early career of this remarkable soldier of fortune and the course of events that led to his rise to the position of a monarch are chapters of Persian rather than Indo-Pakistan history. It may be mentioned, however, that in the first quarter of the eighteenth century the once-powerful dynasty of the Safawids had become so weak that it could not protect the country from the aggressions of the Afghans. Their chief, Mahmud Khan Ghilzai, captured Isphahan in 1722 and drove the Safawids into the forests of Mazandran. The miseries of the people were further aggravated by the invasions of the Russians and Turks. It was from this state of helplessness that Nadir delivered his countrymen, placed 'Abbas III on the throne (1731) and extended the frontiers of the Persian Empire to

its original limits. Five years later he removed the puppet monarch and ascended the throne with the title of Nadir Shah. Having cleared the country of the Russians and the Turks and capturing Balkh and Herat in the north he decided to march on Qandahar and punish the Ghilzais for their aggressions against his country. Nadir Shah sent a messenger informing Muhammad Shah of his intention to invade Qandahar and requested him to issue the necessary instructions to the government of Kabul not to give refuge to the fleeing Afghans.¹ The Mughul government followed a policy of cautious neutrality because the result of the siege was uncertain and also because they had no accurate idea of the danger of displeasing Nadir Shah. On receiving a request from the *subahdar* of Kabul (Nasir Khan) for money to pay the arrears of his troops the *amir-ul-umara* is stated to have given a derisive reply: "Do you think I am a petty simpleton that I shall be impressed by such a tale as yours? Our houses are built on the plain; we do not fear anything except what we can see with our own eyes. Your houses stand on lofty hills and therefore you have probably sighted Mongol and Qazilbash armies from the roofs of your houses! Reply to your master that we are writing for money to the governor of Bengal: and when the Bengal revenue arrives after the rainy season, the money due will be quickly sent to Kabul."²

¹ The author of the *Siyar* blames the Mughul government for not exhibiting feelings of cordiality towards the Safawids and for not sending a prompt reply to Nadir Shah's message that the Afghans were not to be given refuge. He needlessly mentions the obligations under which Babur and Humayun had been placed by the contemporary rulers of Persia. In fact he ignores the difficulties of Muhammad Shah. The Afghans were his immediate neighbours and to have openly entered into an agreement with the Persian besiegers of Qandahar would have been undiplomatic. The Mughul government, unwilling to risk a rupture with either the Persians or the Afghans, sent delayed and diplomatic replies. The suggestion that the Mughul Emperor was worried as to the manner in which Nadir Shah was to be addressed may be correct. Nadir's status had till then not been recognised. But one can easily understand that the delay in sending the reply was deliberate and no commitment could be made until the position became clear.

² Anand Ram as quoted by Irvine, II, 324-5.

After capturing Qandahar, Nadir Shah marched northwards and took Ghaznin and Kabul. From the latter place he sent a letter to Muhammad Shah explaining to him the circumstances under which he had to seize that city and also complaining about the conduct of the Delhi government. His messengers, however, were waylaid and slain. The news of this murder reached him at Gandamak when he was engaged in subduing the unruly chiefs in the neighbouring hills. He immediately marched on Jalalabad, where his messenger had been murdered, captured the town and subjected it to a general massacre. At Jamrud an attempt was made by the governor of Kabul to check the advance of the invader. But he was defeated and captured alive. Staying at Peshawar for about three weeks Nadir resumed his march on December 12, reaching the neighbourhood of Lahore early in January, 1739. Here he routed the forces of Zakariya Khan the governor of Lahore, in a battle fought at a distance of twelve miles from that city.

From Lahore he again wrote to Muhammad Shah complaining to him that although they both belonged to the same race the Indian government had not given him any help in crushing the Afghans who had done more harm to the subcontinent than to Persia, hinting probably at Humayun's defeat and expulsion at the hands of Sher Shah. He was surprised at the discourtesy of the Emperor in not replying to his previous letters. However, he cleverly attributed it to the advice of evil councillors whom, he added, he was now coming to punish.¹

The danger had now become manifest but even in the face of a crisis the courtiers of the Emperor could not rise above party and personal differences. Khan Dauran whose influence with the Emperor was supreme asked the Rajputs to come to the help of the

¹ Evidently this was a mere pretext. Nadir had decided to invade Delhi.

government but nothing came of this.¹ Having passed the month of *Ramazan* (December 1838) outside the walls of Delhi, the imperial forces began to move in the direction of Karnal, where they entrenched themselves behind a mud wall. Nadir Shah arrived there on February 23, 1739 and set up his camp at a short distance to the west of the town. The Persians tried but failed to intercept Sa'adat Khan's forces and to prevent him from joining the Mughul camp. Sa'adat Khan's attempt to recover his baggage train which the Persians had captured soon developed into a full-fledged battle. Khan Dauran, followed later by the Emperor and Nizam-ul-Mulk, soon arrived at the scene, but the Mughul forces, despite their numerical superiority, were soon overpowered by the hardy warriors of Nadir Shah. The battle which had begun early in the afternoon soon became a massacre of the Mughul troops because as 'Abdul Karim, the author of the *Bayan-i-waqai*, says referring to the inferiority of the Mughul firearms "arrows cannot answer bullets." Khan Dauran was mortally wounded, Sa 'adat Khan was driven to the camp of the victor by a fellow townsman while Muhammad Shah returned to the camp. The disastrous defeat of the Mughuls was the inevitable result of the mutual jealousies of the nobles, which had weakened the government and undermined the solidarity of the forces. To this should be added the hasty action of Sa'adat

¹ On the basis of a letter of Baji Rao to his general Pilaji Jadun it has been suggested that the Emperor had made an appeal to the Marathas also. (Irvine, *The Later Mughals*, II, 336).

It seems rather strange that Khan Dauran and other statesmen having similar views were unable to assess the true feelings of the Hindu nationalities. The plundering raids of the Marathas, the treachery of the Rajputs, the revolt of the Sikhs, the highway robberies of the Jats and the Bundelas had shaken the foundations of the Mughul Empire. As long as persons of strong character held the throne the non-Muslim chiefs and communities took pride in offering their services to the imperial government. Until the time of Aurangzib we find Rajput chiefs fighting for the Emperor against the rebellious Marathas, but when the central government began to show signs of decline these communities refused to fight even against a foreign invader. In the first half of the eighteenth century Nadir Shah's invasion was the deadliest blow to the prestige of the Empire, and on this occasion the Mughuls had to bear it alone.

Khan who failed to take into account the superior generalship of the Persian invader and precipitated a battle at a most inopportune moment. It was not only in war that the Mughuls suffered on account of the intrigues and personal rivalries of selfish courtiers, but even in the field of diplomacy they had to face the consequences of these evils. Sa'adat Khan had persuaded Nadir Shah to accept an indemnity of twenty million rupees and to leave the subcontinent. On receiving a communication from Nadir Shah the Emperor sent Nizam-ul-Mulk to confirm this agreement, and as a reward for his success in this mission, conferred upon him the title of *amir-ul-umara* which had fallen vacant owing to the death of Khan Dauran. Sa'adat Khan took this to heart and immediately met Nadir Shah, arousing the robber's instinct in him. He was told that it would be unwise on his part to accept the small indemnity of two crores of rupees, which he promised to pay from his own treasury. Nadir at once changed his mind and decided to go and plunder the imperial treasures at Delhi. Muhammad Shah was called and detained in the Persian camp. On being reminded by Nizam-ul-Mulk of the promise that he had made, Nadir Shah replied that there was no question of a breach of promise and that the life and the throne of the Mughul Emperor would remain safe. Sa'adat Khan's treachery needs no comment. The plunder of the capital, the massacre of its inhabitants and all the calamities that came in their wake left the Mughul Empire prostrate and there is little doubt that but for the selfishness of Sa'adat Khan the people of Delhi would have escaped these disasters. Sa'adat could have used less deadly weapons to feed his greed for power. And the darkest aspect of the tragedy is the irony that he did not live to reap the reward of his own treachery. Nadir Shah set out for Delhi on March 12, Muhammad Shah having been allowed to go

ahead to make necessary preparations for the reception of the conqueror. Nadir entered the city on March 20 and celebrated there the 'Id-ul-Azha and the Nauruz both of which fell on the following day. The *khutbah* of the 'Id was recited in his name and the Persian soldiers were quartered in and around the city. Nadir wanted to plunder the treasures of Delhi but the general massacre of its inhabitants was provoked by their own acts. A number of Persian soldiers were killed in the city and when Nadir Shah rode through the streets stones were thrown at him from the roofs of the houses. An attempt was also made to shoot him but he escaped the bullet. He naturally became furious at these acts of violence and ordered a general massacre. The blood bath lasted throughout the day and more than a hundred thousand persons were butchered.'

In the evening Nizam-ul-Mulk and Qamar-ud-din Khan brought an appeal from the Emperor. Nadir Shah accepted this and the bloodshed and arson were stopped by his orders. The imperial treasures were plundered in a most ruthless manner. It has not been possible even approximately to estimate the value of the precious stones and other articles seized by the invader. The Peacock Throne alone had jewels worth 20 million rupees in addition to the gold of which it was made. Khan Dauran's confiscated property yielded fifty million while Nizam-ul-Mulk and Qamar-ud-din Khan each contributed fifteen million rupees. This gives an idea of how much must have been seized from the nobles and other well-to-do citizens.² Before leaving the subcontinent he formally annexed the Mughul territory to the west of the Indus and gave some advice to the Emperor on some major questions of policy,

¹ Fraser puts the figure at 120000, Nadir Shah's secretary brings it down to 30000 which is too low.

² According to his secretary Nadir got "15 *krors* of Rupees in cash, besides a vast amount in jewels, clothing, furniture and other things from the Imperial store-houses." Fraser puts it at 70 crores, elephants and horses being in addition to this, *Vide* Irvine, *The Later Mughals*, II, 371.

such as direct payment to the nobles and officials from the treasury instead of granting assignments.

Nadir Shah's invasion shook the very foundations of the Empire which was left almost in a state of stupefaction, while the entire machinery of government was dislocated. Nowhere were the effects of this weakening of central authority felt more distinctly than in the distant provinces. The remaining years of Muhammad Shah's reign were marked by a rapid disintegration of the imperial authority. Bengal (including Bihar and Orissa), Oudh, Rohilkhand, the Maratha States and the Deccan, besides several minor principalities, were now in a position to flout the authority of the central government. Their heads, although nominally still holding offices on behalf of the Emperor, behaved as independent princes. Even in their dealings with neighbouring States and foreign companies they began to follow an independent course of action, which, perhaps more than any other single factor, contributed to the growth and expansion of the political influence of European settlers. Muhammad Shah died in 1748, leaving to his successor an exhausted treasury, a dilapidated machinery of government, a demoralized army, and a throne which had lost much of its former prestige and dignity. To hold Muhammad Shah entirely or even mainly responsible for all this would be a distortion of facts. It is true that he was weak-minded, lacked decision and was given to ease and luxury, but he had to tackle tremendous problems and in an extremely unfavourable atmosphere. Surrounded by selfish courtiers and officials and caught in a net-work of intrigue and counter-intrigue he had little opportunity of following a more vigorous policy.

CHAPTER IV

AHMAD SHAH, 'ALAMGIR II AND SHAH 'ALAM

Ahmad Shah, a young man of twentyone, lacked the ability and strength to control the ambitious leaders of factional groups in the Empire. The death of Nizam-ul-Mulk in June 1748 worsened the situation in the south. Conditions at Delhi had also deteriorated. Safdar Jang, strongly partisan like most of his contemporaries, was appointed *wazir*. The title of *Amir-ul-Umara* was conferred on Zu-'l-Fiqar Jang. Nizam-ul-Mulk's eldest son, Ghazi-ud-din, became *bakhshi*. More unfortunate than these appointments was the fact that Ahmad Shah was completely under the control of a cabal of women and eunuchs with Jawid Khan (himself a eunuch), at its head.

Safdar Jang had tried to excite the Rohillas against the Bangash. But his scheme had only partially succeeded and in the end he was himself forced to take up arms against the Bangash. The latter, however, inflicted a defeat on his forces near Patiali. Overcome by feelings of revenge against the Bangash chief, Ahmad Khan, and prompted by selfish motives he invited Holkar, Sindhia and the Jats to come to his aid, forgetting that it was dangerous and impolitic to allow the Marathas to come so near the capital. Ahmad Khan appealed to his kinsmen, the Rohillas, to come to his help. They came, but only when the Marathas had completely defeated the Bangash. Safdar Jang's selfish policy was thus mainly responsible for the annihilation of a small but vigorous Muslim state which could have strengthened the Muslims in the area.

In 1751 Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded the Panjab for the third time. The governor Mu'in-ul-Mulk offered resistance but in the absence of any help from the centre

he could not succeed and had to surrender.¹ On receiving a report of the invasion Ahmad Shah had sent pressing messages to Safdar Jang to bring Holkar and the other allies.

Safdar Jang arrived in May 1752, too late to be of any help, and was greatly annoyed to learn that the Emperor had already purchased safety by ceding extensive territories. He found himself in a difficult position because he had made lavish promises to the Marathas which the Emperor apparently could not fulfil even if he so desired. This embittered the already delicate relations between the Emperor and his *wazir*. They further deteriorated when Safdar Jang treacherously murdered Jawid Khan, the trusted counsellor of the Emperor. In May, 1753, he raised the standard of revolt and openly took up arms. Ghazi-ud-din who had left for the Deccan was poisoned by his step-mother at Aurangabad. His son Shihab-ud-din, a brave and talented youth of eighteen, received his father's title of *Ghazi-ud-din* became the *amir-ul-umara* and joined the Emperor's party. Safdar called Suraj Mal Jat for help. Najib Khan Rohilla joined Ghazi-ud-din and Zu'l-Fiqar Jang supported the other party. An unfortunate feature of this conflict was that Shi'ah-Sunni differences were exploited by the leaders of the two groups. Suraj Mal and Safdar Jang plundered the defenceless population of old city.²

¹ Lahore remained under siege for four months and its people had to face great hardships because of scarcity of provisions and fodder.

² All contemporary authorities refer to the atrocities of the Jats on the people of old Delhi, most of whom belonged to the poorer sections of the population. The author of the *Siyar* says "... ..the life, property and the honour of women were destroyed. Even a holy man's house proved no safe refuge from Jat rapacity." (III, 47-48). Muhammad Ali Khan, the author of *Tarikh-i Muzaffari*, adds: "Many citizens, on being unable to seek safety by flights, killed themselves in despair" According to Shah Waliullah Safdar Jang had joined Suraj Mal in plundering the people. He writes in his letter to Abdali: "Safdar Jang Irani rebelled making an alliance with Suraj Mal Jat. They attacked Delhi and plundered the entire population of the old city." (*Siyasi Makrubar*) p. 49, Abd-ul-Karim Kashmiri corroborates this in his *Bayan-i-Waqai'*.

In another letter written in Arabic and addressed to Jarullah of Panjab Shah Waliullah mentions the plunder of the old city of Delhi for a period of two months (from the beginning of *Rajab* to the end of *Sha'ban*, 1161 A.H.). He calls it a great calamity (*dahiyah 'azimah* in which property was looted and houses were burnt, "but God kept me, my family and my houses safe from them." (S. M. p. 89).

The civil war lasted for more than six months with no decisive advantage for either side. In November the parties made peace. Safdar Jang was allowed to retain Oudh and Allahabad. Ghazi-ud-din's influence, however, continued to grow until he was in a position to force the Emperor to appoint him *wazir* and dismiss Intizam-ud-Daulah. On June 2, 1754 Ahmad Shah who had not been able to place his full confidence in his young and ambitious minister was deposed and a son of Jahandar Shah was raised to the throne under the title of 'Alamgir II.

The new Emperor, who was dominated by his impetuous minister, was led to believe that he could now recover the Panjab because its capable governor, Mu'in-ul-Mulk, had died and anarchic conditions prevailed in the province.

Ghazi-ud-din's first attempt to recover the province was frustrated by a revolt of the *sin dagh*¹ contingent near Panipat. It was with difficulty that he could suppress their revolt and return to the capital in safety. Shortly afterwards he left once again for the Panjab, this time taking with him not the Emperor but his eldest son Prince 'Ali Guhar. He married the daughter of his uncle, Mu'in-ul-Mulk, and then arrested his widow, appointing Adina Beg as governor. These actions brought Abdali to Lahore, Adina Beg fled in terror and took shelter in Hissar. The Afghan ruler fell upon Delhi and sacked the city. After staying in the capital for about a month he marched into Jat territory and massacred the people of Muttra.

After the departure of Abdali, 'Imad-ul-Mulk seized control of the Emperor who had tried to raise his son 'Ali Guhar against him. An attempt to capture the prince, however, failed and he escaped to Farukhabad. From here he went to Najib-ud-Daulah at

¹ The *sin-dagh* (S brand) troopers had been detached from Safdar Jang by appeals to religious sentiment and by lavish gifts.

Saharanpur and then to Lucknow to meet Shuja'-ud-Daulah (January, 1758). The latter received him cordially but like Najib-ud-Daulah, advised him to recover Bengal where the power of the nawabs had been broken by the treachery of Clive and his victory at Plassey.

In Delhi and the Panjab events had moved rather fast. Raghunath Rao, the Peshwa's brother, had marched into the Panjab and after capturing Sirhind had entered Lahore in May 1758. Prince Timur, whom Abdali had left as governor of the Panjab, fled across the Indus. The Maratha occupation of the province brought Abdali again to the Panjab. As he crossed the Indus, Sabhasad, the Maratha governor, fled, leaving the province to be captured by the invaders. Abdali seized Lahore and Sirhind and then continued his march towards Delhi. Intizam-ud-Daulah, fearing that the Emperor might create an awkward situation for him by seeking the protection of the Afghan leader, murdered him on November 29 and placed a puppet prince on the throne with the title of Shah Jahan III.¹ But when it became clear to him that he would be required to answer for his crimes before Shah Abdali, Intizam slipped away and took shelter with Suraj Mal.

After his brilliant victory over the Marathas in the historic plain of Panipat, Abdali made the necessary arrangements for the conduct of the imperial government. Shah 'Alam's right to the throne was recognized and his eldest son Jawan Bakht was made regent, the *wizarat* was conferred on 'Imad-ul Mulk and Najib-ud-Daulah was made the *amir-ul-umara*. "A better choice," admits Keene, "could not have been made in either case. The young regent was prudent and virtuous, as was usual with the men of his august house during their earlier years and the premier noble was a man of rare intelligence and integrity."²

¹ 'Alamgir had sensed danger and had been in correspondence with Abdali.

² *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, London, 1876, p. 80. It has been suggested that Shah Abdali wanted to divide administrative control of the Empire between 'Imad and Najib in order to retain supreme authority in his own hands.

“Najib Khan Rohila, Umar Khel, Yusufzai, arrived as a foot-soldier at Aonla in the estate of 'Ali Muhammad Khan and took service under him. Though absolutely illiterate, he was a man gifted with ability and wisdom and was a man of good fortune.” Thus begins Nur-ud-din's book on Najib-ud-Daulah,¹ which is the best contemporary source for the life of this remarkable chief who in spite of numerous handicaps tried his best to save the Empire from aggressors and to give it stability.

The name of Najib's father was Asalat Khan ;in 1743 the young Najib came to Rohilkhand and took service under 'Ali Muhammad Khan the Rohilla chief of Aonla. Soon he advanced sufficiently to marry the daughter of Dunde Khan, another leading chief of the Rohillas. In 1751 the Rohillas pressed by Safdar Jang and the Marathas took refuge in the Kamaon hills. Here Najib showed great ability in defending his kinsmen and was in consequence given a command of 1000 men.

In 1753 Safdar Jang's rebellion against the Emperor Ahmad Shah led to a civil war in Delhi. Both parties invited the Rohillas, but Hafiz Rahmat Khan and Dunde Khan decided to remain neutral. Najib however followed a different and more decisive course. He offered his services to the Emperor and reached Delhi on June 2. He was made a *panj-hazari* and got the title of *Najib-ud-Daulah*. As a reward for his distinguished services in the war which ended with victory for the Emperor he was made the *faujdar* of Saharanpur.

¹. The English translation of Najib's biography by Nur-ud-din was published by J. N. Sarkar in *Indian Historical Quarterly* (volume IX, 1933) and *Islamic Culture* (vols. VII and VIII).

Recently another translation by Sheikh A. Rashid has been published at Aligarh under the title *Sarguzash*. References in this chapter are to this translation. Another biography of Najib was written in 1787 by Bihari Lal who was the nephew of the *munshi* of Zabita Khan. In addition to these two biographies we have fairly detailed accounts of his activities in other contemporary works.

In June 1754 'Alamgir II was raised to the throne by 'Imad-ul-Mulk. Najib was also summoned to Delhi and was presented to the new Emperor. But it was not long before his relations with the *wazir* became strained. The two could not cooperate, because they were pulling in different directions. 'Imad-ul-Mulk, grandson of Asaf Jah I, though brave and enterprising, lacked capacity and character. He was selfish and never hesitated to use treachery and murder to gain his ends. It has rightly been stated that "..... during his five-and-a-half years' dictatorship the Delhi empire drifted on to ruin beyond the hope of recovery."¹ He relied on an alliance with the Marathas and paid heavily for their support.² He was unable to pay the heavy sums promised to them, with the result that they made this a pretext for raiding Delhi and other parts of Hindustan. "The Peshwa's instructions to his brother were to squeeze as much money as possible out of the Delhi government, 75 lakhs or at least 50 lakhs."³ To extort money harsh measures were adopted and "many people were seized and beaten." In short 'Imad's policy of keeping himself in power at any cost led the Empire to administrative, financial, and political bankruptcy.

Najib who was not only in touch with some of the leading thinkers of the time—Shah Waliullah for instance—but had also been influenced by their ideas, strongly disapproved 'Imad's methods. To revitalize the Empire and thereby to save the Muslims from total collapse, he believed it was imperative to crush the growing power of the Marathas and the lawlessness of the Sikhs. This could best be achieved by a union of

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, vol. II. pp. 4-5.

² In the letters of the well known eighteenth century sufi poet of Delhi, Mirza Mazhar Jan-Janan we find pointed reference to these draw-backs of 'Imad's character and policy. See *Kalimat-i-Tayyabat*, Mujtabai Press, Delhi, pp. 58-61

³ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*. vol. II, p. 15.

Muslim princes under a powerful leader. He therefore co-operated with Ahmad Shah Abdali when the latter invaded the subcontinent in 1756. The *wazir's* efforts to organize resistance having collapsed Abdali came to Delhi, plundered the Doab and collected money from the capital to pay the expenses of his expedition. Before his return in 1757 he appointed Najib as *bakhshi* of the Empire and his *mukhtar* at the court. As soon as Ahmad Shah's back was turned 'Imad called the Marathas to his help and expelled Najib from the capital (1757). He retired to his *jagir*, but was ultimately forced to shut himself up in the fort of Shukkartal. The Marathas besieged the fort, but on hearing of the arrival of Abdali who had again invaded the subcontinent, they fled. Najib met the Shah near Meerut, and remained with him till the fateful Battle of Panipat.

Abdali had entered the Panjab in October 1759 and defeated the Marathas in two decisive battles fought near Thanesar (December 1759) and at Barariaghat (January 1760). Another defeat was inflicted on them by Najib near Sikandara and their commander was forced to take refuge in Agra. After these reverses Maratha power in the north appeared to have collapsed and Abdali would have returned if Najib's persuasive eloquence strengthened by his cogent reasoning and a substantial subsidy had not succeeded in making the Shah change his mind. One of the main problems for Abdali was to win over Shuja'-ud-Daulah whose support was also solicited by the Marathas. Najib himself went to Oudh and ultimately succeeded in impressing upon the Nawab the need of joining hands with the Shah. There was then a move for peace which was supported by Shuja'. Again Najib had to argue with the Shah in favour of decisive action against the Marathas. The Shah accepted his counsel and decided to go ahead with the necessary preparations for the

impending struggle, and Najib threw himself into the venture with the zeal of a *mujahid*.

Two weeks after his magnificent victory at Panipat, Abdali entered Delhi (29 January, 1761). In the absence of the Emperor, Shah 'Alam, the queen-mother accompanied by the heir apparent, Jawan Bakht, received the victor. After the hardships of an arduous campaign he wanted to have some repose. But his departure was precipitated by the clamour of his troops who now insisted on being led back to their homes. Before leaving the capital (March 20) he recognised Shah 'Alam as Emperor and appointed 'Imad and Najib as *wazir* and *mir-bakhshi* respectively.

It was a political blunder on the part of Abdali to have left the subcontinent almost in a state of chaos. None of the leaders here, not even Najib, could have been expected to succeed against the forces of disruption, a favourable atmosphere for which was created by the Afghan-Maratha conflict. Abdali performed only half the task. He won the war, but not the peace.¹

The royal party at court could not tolerate 'Imad who was the murderer of Shah 'Alam's father. Najib-ud-Daulah was therefore summoned to Delhi² and entrusted with the responsibility of administration which he retained until his death ten years later. During this period he was able to maintain to some extent at least the prestige and authority of the Mughuls in spite of the disruptive activities of the Sikhs, the Jats and the Marathas. He exhibited remarkable courage and ability

¹ Shah Waliullah's efforts played an important part in the defeat of the Marathas. He wrote to Shah Abdali describing the conditions prevailing in the subcontinent and told him that it was his bounden duty (*farz-i-'ayn*) to come to Hind-Pakistan and crush the Marathas. In the subcontinent itself he appealed to the chiefs, the soldiery and the people to rise to the occasion. Najib-ud-Daulah was specially advised to realize his responsibility and prepare himself for *jihaad*. For details see chapter XVI.

² Najib entered Delhi on April 7 with the crown prince, Jawan Bakht, the two seated on the same elephant.

in solving problems of government on the one hand and breaking the power of his adversaries on the other.

In 1762 Abdali came again and stayed in the Panjab till the end of the year, punishing the Sikhs for their aggressive designs. Najib visited him twice and actually helped him with his troops. By his conduct and services he had created a deep impression on the Afghan invader who is stated to have called him "the only manly Afghan among the Indian Afghans." As 'Imad-ul-Mulk had failed to assume the *wizarat* it was now given to Shuja'-ud-Daulah. But he was an absentee minister and the entire control of the affairs of the state was in the hands of Najib.

The most stirring event of Najib's regime was the protracted campaign against the Jats. During the critical years preceding the battle of Panipat, Suraj Mal had managed to save himself by humouring both the Marathas and the Afghan invaders by providing military supplies and monetary payments as the occasion demanded. But his ambitious design to seize power at Delhi after Abdali's departure under the cover of his tool, 'Imad-ul-Mulk, had been frustrated by Najib's assumption of the office of *amir-ul-umara*. He was more successful in his plundering raids. In June 1761 he fell upon Agra and laid siege to its fort. Unable to take it by force he resorted to bribery and succeeded in purchasing the keepers of the fort who opened the gates to him. On taking possession of it he plundered to his heart's content and is said to have seized 50 lakhs of rupees in addition to enormous military stores and articles of the royal wardrobe. In spite of these excesses of the Jats, Najib took a realistic view of the situation and came to terms with Suraj Mal. But the Jat leader soon violated the peace by raiding Farrukhnagar and

treacherously capturing its Baluch chief Musawi Khan.¹ To Najib's protest he sent a haughty reply and marched with his forces on Delhi. Najib was thus forced to punish him for his misdeeds. He was prepared to let the Jats have the fort but he wrote to him, "it is not proper to lock up these people with their women. Please set them free for my sake." Haughty as ever, Suraj Mal retorted: "Is it proper for you to exert yourself for the release of my enemies and negotiate on their behalf? It is now evident that you had come with the intention of attacking me Had this campaign not come to an end by this time, you would have joined Musawi Khan Under these circumstance the bond of friendship between you and me is broken Do not have any expectation of good from me."² "Najib's course of action was now clear. He had just recovered from a serious illness and had hardly been ten days in the capital; but allowing no considerations of health to stand in his way he marched out because the enemy had reached within four *kos* of Shahjahanabad. In reply to Najib's last appeal to avoid hostilities Suraj Mal said, "Tell the Nawab to come to the field in the morning and face me once." Najib-ud-Daulah's reaction was that "he talks like a low and mean fellow..... There is no alternative but to fight."³ Evidently

¹ Nur-ud-din describes in detail Jat high-handedness against the Baluchi chiefs. The Jats had seized territory in the Mewati region and complained that one of the Baluchi chiefs had given shelter to a Mewati brigand. This was made the pretext of their attack on Farrukhnagar. That it was an act of pure aggression is manifest from Shah Waliullah's letter to Taj Muhammad Baluch. He calls the movements of the Jats as *sarkashi-hai Jat* and appeals to Taj Muhammad to assist Musawi Khan in his resistance to Jat aggression. (*Siyasi Maktubat*, p. 85). But Taj did not act on this advice and Musawi Khan was left alone to defend himself. Suraj Mal besieged him with twenty thousand cavalry, countless infantry and well-equipped artillery." Musawi Khan was forced to sue for peace but when he came out of the fort he was made prisoner and sent to the fort of Dig. (*Sarguzasht*, Eng. Trans. pp. 68-69).

² *Ibid.*

³ The story is related that on his return Ya'qub 'Ali (Najib's envoy to Suraj Mal) was making his report in mild words, when Karamullah, a personal servant of Najib, who had accompanied him, interrupted and said, "My Lord, the truth is that if there is the least spark of honour in your breast, there is no alternative but war." Najib replied, "True, and I hope to curb the power of this infidel."

the Nawab's anxiety to avert war was taken by his opponent to be a sign of weakness.

The decision having been taken no time was to be lost. Najib came straight to the banks of the Hindan. A hotly contested battle was fought on December 25, 1763. The day began with an exchange of artillery fire which lasted until the afternoon. Towards the evening Suraj Mal tried to cut through the troops of Najib, but was badly handled by them and slain. His forces fled in the night leaving no trace of the camp. His son and successor, Jawahir Singh, continued the struggle and purchased the support of the Marathas and the Sikhs for that purpose. He collected an army consisting of 30,000 horse, fifty thousand foot and a well equipped artillery. The Maratha chief Malhar Rao joined the Jats with 20,000 soldiers telling Najib that he had done so for the sake of securing money¹ and that he would prolong the campaign.

Najib again tried to avoid a conflict² but Jawahir acted as his father had done a year earlier. He marched on Delhi and forced Najib to offer battle. He came out and took position in the *Buland Bagh* at the foot of the fort and threw a bridge of boats on the Jumna to get provisions from the Doab. His troops dug a trench with a rampart behind it. Jawahir opened fire on November 15 and moved forward but the trench prevented his entry into the city. On the following day the Jats made another attempt to overpower the Rohillas by sending a detachment to capture the boat-bridge and attack the enemy from the rear. But they met with stiff resistance and in spite of their numerical superiority had to withdraw. The Jats now plundered Shahdarah

¹ *Sarguzashi*, p. 80.

² Najib's letter to Jawahir Singh is preserved in the *Murasilat-i-Najib-ud-Daulah* (M. U. Library, Abdus Salam Collection) wherein he tries to persuade the Jat chief to agree to a treaty. But Jawahir would listen to no proposals of peace.

and planting their guns along the river bombarded the city for a fortnight.

In the meantime the Sikhs with whom negotiations had been conducted for some time arrived.¹ Attacks on the city were now renewed and the war continued for several weeks. Najib's communications were cut off and famine conditions began to prevail in the capital. But his grim determination to resist the enemy remained unshaken until at last the Jat invaders were forced to withdraw (February 1765), having spent in the adventure 160 lakhs of rupees and incurred a further liability of 12 lakhs (due to the Marathas) without achieving anything at all.

Najib now turned his attention to the Sikhs who had crossed the Jumna early in March 1763 and plundered Saharanpur. But on hearing the news of Abdali's arrival they withdrew. In the following year however they renewed their raids and according to Miskin who was an eye-witness "40000 of their horsemen crossed the Jumna and disturbed and looted the Saharanpur and Meerut districts. Nawab Najib Khan for a month or two, moved in every direction where the Sikhs were reported to be roving, in order to protect the country, and fought and usually defeated them. As they did not make a firm stand anywhere and offer battle, he had to run about after them, but they did not give up their jackal tricks."² Najib, however, continued the pursuit

¹Jawahir's interview with the Sikh Sardars was interesting. Nur-ud din reports : "When the Sikhs arrived to within seven *kos* from the capital..... Jawahir Singh went across to meet them. The meeting was however not a pleasant one. The Sikhs objected to Jawahir Singh's huqqa being brought to the meeting place..... Besides the seating arrangements were also not quite appropriate. When Jawahir Singh protested the Sikhs replied, 'Jawahir Singh, a son of Suraj Mal, has taken shelter with the Khalsa, and has become a Nanak Sikh. He wants our help to avenge his father's death..... They even turned out the huqqa-bearer of Jawahir Singh with abuse, but as Jawahir Singh was in great need of their help he patiently bore all these insults.'"

Sarguzash, pp. 89-90.

²Miskin, 266 (as quoted in *Studies in Later Mughul History of the Punjab*, p. 196).

of these lawless raiders. In 1179 A.H. he crossed the Jumna and went to Jalalabad Luhari near which several skirmishes took place. The Sikhs then moved towards the *parganah* of Shamli where a stiff battle was fought. The details of the day-long contest may be read in the pages of Nur-ud-din's work. He concludes his account thus : "By this time evening had approached. Najib-ud-Daulah ordered the flag to be hoisted and the camp to be pitched at the very spot where they then were. The Sikhs too encamped about a *kos* from there. Quickly in the darkness of the night they took their belongings across the Jumna and left for their native country. Next morning there was not a trace of them left."¹

Najib returned to the capital and spent the rainy season there. After the rains he was told that the Sikhs were assembling in the district of Karnal on their way to Jawahir's territory. He came out and moved in the direction of Sarai Sita Ram, but soon he came to know that the enemy had retreated plundering the town of Rewari on their march. A year later (1180 A.H.) Najib-ud-Daulah intercepted a Sikh force which was returning from the Doab and Jat territory laden with rich booty. "Now the Sikhs should receive a good thrashing," he is stated to have said, before marching against them. He moved fast and took the enemy unawares.

"They were out" reports Nur-ud-Din, "raiding the country for plunder, far from their camp. When they heard the noise of the Nawab's retinue and the beating of drums, they rushed back to their camp in much confusion.. ..Najib-ud-Daulah thus captured an immense amount of booty including rows upon rows of camels, horses and ponies laden with booty. He drove away the Sikhs for five *kos* upto Kandhala.....It was after a long time that such an enormous booty was seized from the Sikhs. Eventually, the Sikhs crossed the

¹ *Sarguzashi*, p. 116.

Jumna and went back to their homes, while Najib returned to the city.”¹

Najib died in 1770, and thus came to an end the career of a soldier statesman whose honesty of purpose and brilliance of political insight entitle him to a place of eminence among the leaders of this sub continent in the second half of the eighteenth century. He started life as an ordinary foot-soldier but through his ability and character rose to the highest position in the realm and guided the fortunes of the Empire of Delhi as its *amir-ul-umara* for a full decade. He had the rare distinction of combining military skill with administrative capacity. A realist in politics he exhibited as much ability in diplomacy as in the field of battle. Abdali was undoubtedly one of the most eminent figures of the age but it is doubtful if he had the same grasp over contemporary politics as Najib. He was one of the few statesmen of the period who had respect for principles and would not let them be compromised under adverse conditions. Religious convictions and moral scruples often stand in the path of political opportunism, but Najib never behaved as an opportunist. He was once advised by Malhar Rao to stop cow-slaughter in his camp to please the Peshwa. “This is a religious matter” was his firm reply, “and I shall never abandon it.”²

Najib’s life can be divided into two unequal but clear cut periods. Until 1753 he was a second rate Rohilla chief prospering under patronage of the leaders of his own kinsmen, particularly his father-in-law, Dunde Khan. But in that fateful year his fortune took a revolutionary turn. Influenced by the preaching of Maulana Ahmad who had been deputed by the court to secure the support of the Rohillas in its war against the rebellious *wazir*, Safdar Jang, Najib, unlike other

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 119 120.

² *Ibid.* p. 15.

chiefs, took a bold decision. He offered his services to the Emperor and performed remarkable feats of bravery in the course of the civil war. He was honoured with an imperial title and the office of a *faujdar*. His contact with the court had widened his political vision and opened to him new vistas of glory and greatness. In his new assignment, the *faujdari* of Saharanpur, he took effective measures to consolidate his position. The town of Najibabad was founded and forts were built at Pathargarh, Ghausgarh and Shukkartal.

As a sincere Muslim, Najib could not have remained unaffected by the march of events which were contributing to the growing weakness of the Mughul Empire on the one hand and the degeneration of the Muslims on the other. The death of Nizam-ul-Mulk in 1748 had deprived the subcontinent of the only statesman who represented traditions of efficiency and devotion to the state.¹

The direction of affairs had fallen into the hands of incompetent and selfish politicians who had not the slightest scruples in sacrificing the superior interests of the state for their own advantage. Safdar Jang's policy of inviting the Marathas and the Jats to help him in his quarrels with the neighbouring chiefs and the Emperor was bearing its fruit. In 1751 he had invited Malhar Rao Holkar, Jayappa Sindhia and Suraj Mal to support him in his wars against the Pathans of Farrukhabad. Undoubtedly he succeeded in crushing the Pathans but the Marathas had to be placated with the cession of vast territories—north of the Jumna. More dangerous, however, was the fact that they were encouraged in interference in the politics of Delhi. Their task was not difficult because other

¹ Nadir Shah had offered the throne of Delhi to him but he had "refused to be disloyal to his master." (C. H. I., vol. IV, p. 385.)

politicians, as unpatriotic as Safdar Jang, also sought their support and paid handsomely for it.¹ The Marathas took the fullest advantage of this unhappy state of affairs at the court and soon became the predominant force in the Empire. The Jats and the Sikhs who, by the middle of the eighteenth century, had considerably added to their strength, made the situation more complicated. Najib understood the position clearly and adopted a consistent policy for saving the Empire. He was fortunate in having a capable guide in Shah Waliullah who built up his confidence in his capacity to play the role of the champion of Islam. In letter after letter the great reformer tells Najib to prepare for the struggle and not to be worried by the numerical superiority of the enemy.

It would have been easier and served his selfish interests better if he had tried to build a state for himself like Oudh or Hyderabad, and to have expanded his dominions at the expense of imperial territories. He chose, however, to devote himself to the service of the Muslims and their Empire. The few years of life that were left to him after his assumption of power, were a period of constant struggle against the forces of disruption both in the capital and outside.

Najib's greatest achievement was to secure the defeat of the Marathas at Panipat. Obviously this could not have been achieved by him single handed. Shah Waliullah had, however, prepared Abdali for this difficult task. Najib's achievement lay in giving the plan a practical shape by securing the alliance and co-operation of the Muslim leaders of Hind-Pakistan. The rapid expansion of the power of the Marathas in the sixth

¹ Ghazi-ud-din (later 'Imad-ul-Mulk) grandson of Asaf Juh I, who had been made *bakhshi* by Safdar Jang in 1752 turned against his patron and invited the Marathas to his aid. In 1754 it was with the help of Holkar that he deposed Ahmad Shah and placed 'Alamgir II on the throne.

decade of the eighteenth century¹ and their ambitious designs to become master of the entire subcontinent leaves no doubt that if they had not been routed at Panipat the Mughul Empire would have died almost a century earlier. Equally true is the fact that although weak and degenerate as a political machine it was a source of great moral support to the Muslims and its end would have caused irreparable loss to their political, social, cultural and economic life. This imminent disaster was averted, although only temporarily, by the efforts of Shah Waliullah and his great follower Najib-ud-Daulah.

Najib was illiterate, but he was fully conscious of the advantages of education. He had not only started a big *madrasah* in Najibabad on the lines of the well-known *Madrasah-i-Rahimiyah* of Delhi but used to give stipends and honoraria to a large number of scholars.² His brilliant qualities as a "leader of men in action" have been admired even by historians who have tried to smear his reputation by characterising his diplomatic skill as opportunism.³ But Najib was much more than a mere war lord. No doubt he had to do plenty of fighting but he did not fight for its own sake or for aggression. For him fighting was indispensable because it was the only effective weapon that he could use against hostile forces. The structure of Muslim society with the Mughul Empire as its key stone had been shaken to its very foundations and was on the verge of collapse. Najib took upon his shoulders the heavy responsibility

¹ With Raghunath Rao's occupation of Lahore in April 1758 the Maratha power had reached its zenith in the north-west. For detailed instructions of the Peshwa regarding occupation of fresh territories in Bengal, Bihar and other parts of the eastern regions see his letters to his general. These have been reproduced by Sarkar. *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, (Second edition), vol. II, pp. 164-67.

² According to Shah 'Abdul' Aziz "there were five hundred scholars ('*ulama*') with Najib-ud-Daulah, the lowest (stipend) being rupees five and the highest rupees five hundred." (*Malfuzat*, p. 81; *S. M.* p. 202).

³ J. N. Sarkar : *Fall of the Mughal Empire*.

of guarding it against powerful enemies. But like other leaders of the century he had to struggle against heavy odds and therefore we need not be surprised that he only partially succeeded in his mission. He could not avert the disaster, but he certainly postponed it for a considerable time, and in the long run this proved to be an immense advantage for the Muslims.

Mirza 'Abdullah better known as Prince 'Ali Guhar was a young man of thirty at the time of his father's assassination. In 1758 he had exhibited remarkable courage and perseverance in resisting 'Imad-ul-Mulk's attempt to capture him.

On May 19 he was besieged in his residence (*Haweli Mardan Khan*) by the overwhelming forces of the minister, but he put up a spirited defence and managed to escape on the following morning, cutting his way through the hosts of the besiegers with only a small band of devoted followers. After wandering for several months in Baluch and then in the Rohilla country he reached Oudh where he was received by Shuja'-ud-Daulah at the beginning of January 1759. His adventures during the next five years had little to do with the history of Delhi.¹ His repeated failures in Bihar and Bengal, however, diminished the prestige of the Mughuls and the Nawab-Wazir of Oudh and encouraged the authorities of the East India Company further to strengthen their control over those provinces. The arrangements made by Clive with Shuja'-ud-Daulah through the Treaty of Allahabad (August 16, 1765) and the imperial grant of the *diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa extracted from Shah 'Alam four days earlier, were heavy blows at the power and resources of both Delhi and Lucknow, and were to a large extent responsible for their subsequent demoralization in politics. When it

¹ On receiving the news of his father's murder he had proclaimed himself Emperor near Sahasram in December 1759.

was proposed that the Nawab of Bengal should be divested of all responsibility for the defence of the country and the administration of its revenue in exchange for fifty-three lakhs for the expenses of the court the youthful Najm-ud-Daulah was very happy. Shuja'-ud-Daulah too was satisfied and felt that he had been treated generously.¹

Shah 'Alam suffered heavily in prestige besides losing crores of rupees in revenue. Ghulam Husain's ironical remark on the grant of the *diwani* is significant. "And a business of so much importance" he writes, "was settled, without any objection by the parties and without any negotiations with the Company or the King of England through capable envoys or correspondence by efficient secretaries, with greater ease and smoothness than is required for the sale of a jack-ass or a beast of burden."² Shah 'Alam soon began to realize, that comfortable and easy-going though his life at Allahabad would be, it would degrade him to the position of a prisoner; moreover his continued absence from the capital might tempt the Sikhs or the Marathas to place their own nominee upon the throne. Indeed since 1761 he had been trying to persuade the English to send him back to his capital. They had promised to do this, and repeated the pledge from year to year, but they were unwilling to fulfil it and thought it against their interests to leave him in the custody of the Marathas. Shah 'Alam was also hesitant to seek the help of the Marathas. It would have been impolitic to displease his new friends, the English, and Shuja'-ud-Daulah particularly because of the unsettled state of affairs at Delhi. But the death of Najib, in October 1770, made him impatient and a couple of months later he took the decisive step of contacting the Marathas. An agreement was signed by the Heir Apparent on behalf of the

¹ J. C. Marshman, *The History of India*, part I, p. 310.

² *Styar*, II, 354.

Emperor, and he was able to leave Allahabad on April 13, 1771, reaching Delhi on January 6, 1772, which coincided with the eve of the 'Id-ul-Fitr.

The arrival of the Emperor naturally raised great hopes for the restoration of peace and prosperity among the citizens of Delhi. However the new Emperor's task was little short of the reconquest of a lost empire and the restoration of its decrepit machinery of government. It is beyond doubt the Shah 'Alam was sincere in his desire to achieve this ; but it is also equally true that the magnitude of the task was too great for his means and capacity, especially when he found his treasury and store empty, his *khalsah* land in the occupation of others, his troops in arrears of pay and his capital surrounded by hostile forces. To add to his difficulties he had promised too large a sum to the Marathas.

For the first ten years after Shah 'Alam's arrival the affairs of the government were conducted by Mirza Najaf Khan, who had come to Delhi from Allahabad in the retinue of the Emperor. An Iranian by birth Najaf had migrated to the subcontinent in his youth together with his sister who had been married to the brother of Safdar Jang. He started his career in the service of Muhammad Quli Khan, who held the fort of Allahabad on behalf of Oudh government, and remained with him until January 1761 when he was murdered by Shuja'-ud-Daulah. Najaf Khan fled to Bengal and took service under Mir Qasim with whom he went to Bundelkhand. In the beginning of 1765 he joined the English camp near Allahabad and rendered them invaluable help in its capture. Against the Marathas, too, his cavalry rendered good service to his new patrons. Thus he rose in favour with the Company and was rewarded for his services at the time of the Treaty of Allahabad with a guarantee for a pension of two lakhs out of the sum that was to be paid to the

Emperor. In 1771 Shah 'Alam took him in regular service.

The Emperor had hardly settled in his capital when he was advised by his councillors to take up arms against Najib's son and successor Zabita Khan who had refused to yield to the government's demands. Shah 'Alam tried to conciliate Zabita Khan. He was asked to attend the coronation and pay homage, but he failed to comply with the order. The Emperor supported by his allies, the Marathas, launched a campaign against him and crossed into the Doab. Leaving his treasures and family in the fort of Pathargarh (near Najibabad) Zabita Khan took post at Shukartal with 4000 troops, posting strong contingents at the place where the river was fordable. The Marathas, however, succeeded in crossing the river below Hardwar and took the Rohillas by surprise. Nevertheless the Rohillas repulsed the Marathas and would have routed them completely had not Najaf Khan's men arrived in time to help them. The Rohillas were now forced back, and several of their chiefs died fighting, Zabita Khan managed to escape towards the hills with a small band of followers. The victorious forces of the Emperor and the Marathas captured and plundered the forts of Shukartal and Pathargarh. On their way back the Marathas plundered nearly every place through which they passed except Amroha which escaped owing to the intercession of Najaf Khan.

Despairing of any support from his own kinsmen who had been demoralized by their defeat, Zabita Khan threw himself on the mercy of Shuja'-ud-Daulah. Hafiz Rahmat Khan and Dunde Khan also joined him and negotiations started for the fateful treaty which saved Rohilkhand from the depredations of the Marathas, only to be destroyed a year later by a foreign aggressor in alliance with the Nawab-Wazir.

Soon after their combined victory over the Rohillas

the relations of the Emperor and the Marathas began to deteriorate. The quarrel had begun over the division of spoils, but the cleavage became wider when the Emperor refused to accept the advice of the Marathas to invade Oudh or Bihar to collect arrears of tribute and to placate Zabita Khan by pardoning him for his past conduct and conferring upon him the title of his father. In fact the Maratha chiefs under pressure from Poona wanted the Emperor to obtain money by some means or the other and then to pay off the sums due to them. Najaf Khan's refusal to agree to these proposals alienated the Marathas. They attacked the capital, defeated the imperial forces and forced the government to pay them a huge sum of money and cede Kara and Allahabad. Zabita Khan was to be appointed *mir-bakhshi*. But in the face of combined opposition from the English, the Nawab of Oudh and the Rohillas, they were unable to obtain possession of Kara and Allahabad.

In September 1773 the Jat raiders plundered the imperial territory up to Ghaziabad, Najaf Khan's base. This was followed up by a regular campaign led by Najaf Khan himself. The Jat raja Nawal Singh fled leaving one post after the other. His followers were so terrified of the imperialists that they are stated to have fled from one of their camp because "they mistook a dust of cloud on the west for the approach of Najaf Khan's army."¹ The decisive battle was fought on October 30, near the newly built town of Barsana. The Jats were defeated and "wealth beyond imagination" fell into the hands of the victors. Najaf Khan now advanced towards Agra and took it from the Jats.

In 1775-76 Najaf Khan had to lead a second campaign against the Jats; this was high-lighted by the

¹ J. N. Sarkar, III, 70.

siege and capture of the strong fort of Dig. The fall of this stronghold brought about the collapse of the Jats ; the whole of their territory was now reduced to subjection, and it was only at the intercession of Rani Kishori, the widow of Suraj Mal, that the conqueror allowed Ranjit Singh to retain the forts of Bharatpur with territories yielding an income of nine lakhs.¹

Having failed to coerce Zabita Khan into submission the Emperor marched against him and encamped near Ghausgarh. After preliminary skirmishing the Rohillas were forced to leave their entrenched position and to offer battle in the open. They fought with great courage but in the end superior numbers triumphed. Zabita Khan managed to escape but his son, Ghulam Qadir, was taken prisoner.

Zabita Khan was now destitute, living on the charity of the Sikhs. With their support he tried to recover the Doab, but was again defeated by Najaf Khan. Ultimately he had to yield to Najaf Khan who treated him with courtesy and restored to him the fort of Ghausgarh with a *jagir* in Saharanpur district. Zabita gave in return the hand of his daughter to Najaf Khan.

Najaf Khan was now appointed *wakil-i-mutlaq* and held supreme charge of affairs until his death in 1782. The failure of Najaf Khan's administration and the hardship which the army and people had to suffer during his regime prove that he was a mere soldier. But what surprises the student of history even more is his moral degradation after the assumption of power. He took to drinking and spent his days and nights in the company of dancing girls and musicians. With the head of the government so hopelessly immersed in pleasure, the entire machinery of administration went out of gear

¹ N. W. P. Gazetteer, VIII, Muttra, p. 163.

and the treasury became empty.¹

Najaf's main problem being finance he turned his attention to the collection of tribute from vassal chiefs. The raja of Jaipur had promised to pay a sum of 20 lakhs for his investiture by the Emperor in February 1779. To recover the debt Najaf planned a two pronged attack on his capital.² Murtaza Khan led his Afghan and Baluch followers by the northern route *via* Shekhawati, while a second army under Mahbub 'Ali Khan marched from Agra, taking the southern route. The imperial forces captured a number of towns and *parganahs*.³ The Rajputs begged for peace, but Mahbub 'Ali refused to grant it on the conditions proposed by them. He would have continued his advance and captured Jaipur had Najaf Khan not over-ruled his decision by accepting a promise of 21 lakhs of rupees of which 2 lakhs were to be paid in cash, and the balance in monthly instalments of seventy-five thousand rupees. Murtaza Khan was as successful as Mahbub 'Ali but like him he was also obliged to return to Delhi. Though brilliantly conceived and excellently started the Jaipur campaign failed to achieve its purpose; and there can be no doubt that Najaf Khan, more than any one else, was responsible for this. Najaf Khan died

¹It is to this state of affairs that the Emperor, helpless himself, refers in the following couplet :

جهان را جهاندار دارد خراب زد ست نجف خان و افراسياب

(Quoted by Sarkar from B. M. O. 25,020, f. 92a.) Mirza Mazhar Jan Janan writes about the city of Delhi thus :

حال مردم این شهر از روز یکه نجف خان آمده است از شاه تا گدا
تباه است

(*Kalimat-i-Tayyabat*, Mujtabai Press, p. 45.)

²The Rajputs, it is stated, were incited in their revolt by 'Abdul Ahad Khan. (Zakaulia : IX, 327).

³ Sarkar has quoted a Marathi dispatch, dated October 10, 1780 which says, 'The Turks have seized 32 parganahs of Jaipur and set up their out-post 12 Kos from Jaipur city,' (*Fall of the Mughal Empire*, second edition, III, 148).

on April 6, 1782. He was the last Mughul minister who possessed some qualities of statesmanship. As a general he lacked the genius and originality of Najib-ud-Daulah, but he certainly showed great foresight in adapting for his army the new weapons and system of warfare which the Europeans had brought to the sub-continent. Excepting Mahadaji Sindhia no other chief employed as many European officers in his army as he did. But he was a poor administrator and although he gave peace and protection to the people of Delhi he could not save the Empire from bankruptcy. The last two years of his life which were a period of his unchallenged supremacy witnessed the complete breakdown of the revenue system and the administrative machinery.

The death of Mirza Najaf, Keene rightly points out, 'left a fatal vacuum in the politics of Hindustan.' For the next two years the court remained a hot-bed of intrigues and quarrels among the selfish and incompetent nobles. One of the factions brought in Sindhia who obtained for the Peshwa the office of *wakil-i-mutlaq* and for himself the post of *naib-wakil-i-mutlaq*.

The Company's policy in regard to their relations with the Emperor was not definite. The advantages of keeping him under protection were obvious but the potential dangers of that course of action too could not be ignored. However at the time of his departure for Delhi the Emperor was given the "strongest assurances of friendship," and "the council entreated his majesty to be convinced of the attachment which they felt towards him....."² How shallow this attachment of the Company was, is indicated by the fact that in reply to the Emperor's demand "to remit our tribute from Bengal" and his advice to "you, our loyal servants, to come with cheerfulness to our presence,"

¹ Madhava Rao Sindhia, p. 96.

² Beveridge: *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, 297.

Hastings replied : “..... I must plainly declare that, until the safety and welfare of these provinces will admit of it, I cannot consent that a single rupee be sent out of them which it is in my power to detain.”¹ Burke was not far from the truth in using the following words :

“The first potentate sold by the Company for money was the Great Mogul, the descendant of Tamerlane. This high personage, as high as human veneration can look at, is by every account amiable in his manners, respectable for his piety according to his mode, and accomplished in all the oriental literatureAfter withholding the tribute of £ 260,000 a year, which the Company was, by the charter they had received from this Prince, under the most solemn obligation to pay, these districts (Kora and Allahabad) were sold to his minister, Shuja Dowla.....”²

On the death of Najaf Khan, who was a safe person from the point of view of the English, Hastings deputed Major James Browne to Delhi with instructions to counteract the growing influence of the Marathas by encouraging the Emperor to ask for troops for his support, provided, of course, satisfactory arrangements could be made for their payment. He was definitely instructed to refuse the payment of tribute for Bengal or open the question of the restoration of Kora and Allahabad.³

In 1784 Prince Jawan Bakht went to Lucknow to meet Hastings. Browne followed and had discussions with the governor-general. As a result of these discussions he returned to Delhi with the offer of “a very

¹ Forrest: *Selections*, I, 58, (Quoted in *Hastings and the Rohilla War* p. 99.)

² Burke's speech on Fox's East India Bill. 1783. Forrest, *Selections*, III, 1025-28. Also quoted by John Strachey in *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, p. 101.

³ *Ibid.*

cautious treaty," which was promptly rejected by the Emperor, although his minister Afrasiyab was ready to accept it.

The only result of these half-hearted measures was that Sindhia became more active and successfully manoeuvred to seize control of the imperial court. Shah 'Alam's main purpose in choosing his supporters was to regain, as much and as best as he could, the lost glory and prestige of the Empire.

Ghulam Qadir, son and successor of Zabita Khan, forced his entry into the capital in September 1787 after defeating Sindhia's agents in a battle below the walls of the city. The Emperor was forced to make him the *bakhshi-i-mamalik* and confer upon him the title of *Amir-ul-Umara Raushan-ud-Daulah Bahadur*.

"He is unworthy of the post," Shah 'Alam is said to have told his clamouring servants, "but I must turn this calamity out of Delhi somehow or other ; if not, should the Ruhelas lay hands on the city nobody can save it. It is expedient to honour him."¹ After a temporary set-back Ghulam Qadir marched on the capital for a second time, defeated the supporters of the Emperor, who were mainly Hindus led by Himmat Bahadur, and entered the city in July 1788. He now wanted to launch a campaign against the Marathas and to expel them from the north. But the Emperor's Hindu treasurer told him that there were no funds available for the projected campaign. This greatly annoyed Ghulam Qadir who flew into a rage against the Emperor because of his sympathy with Sindhia.²

The persistent opposition of the Emperor had completely alienated the Rohilla chief who decided to depose him and place another prince upon the throne

¹ *Despatches of the Maratha Envoys at Delhi*, ed. Parasnis, I, 228, as quoted by Sarkar, III, 305.

² In fact a letter of Shah 'Alam addressed to Sindhia had fallen into his hands. Zakaullah, IX, 239.

with the title of Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad Jahan Shah (31, July).

Shah 'Alam was asked to disclose the secret places where treasures were hoarded. He disclaimed knowledge of any such hidden treasures at which Ghulam Qadir was so incensed that he had the Emperor blinded and thrown into prison. The Rohilla occupation of the capital lasted until October, when Sindhia, who had in the meantime obtained support of Begum Samru, sent an army under Rana Khan. Ghulam Qadir offered resistance. But he was unnerved by a sudden explosion of the powder-magazine, through the negligence of his own soldiers. He took it as a bad omen and vacated the fort immediately.

Rana Khan entered the place and restored the blind Shah 'Alam to the throne.

After his escape from Delhi Ghulam Qadir was pursued by his enemies from place to place. In the course of his flight he was forced to throw himself on the mercy of a Brahmin who betrayed his confidence and placed him in the hands of his enemies. He was sent to Sindhia at Muttra, who had him blinded, mutilated and hanged. His eye-balls, nose and ears were sent in a casket to the Emperor.

Ghulam Qadir had a brief but eventful career. He was killed by the Marathas in a most cruel manner but the memories of the cruelties he had perpetrated on the royal family were too fresh to gain any sympathy for his tragic end in the capital. In passing judgment on his treatment of Shah 'Alam it would be unfair to forget the latter's policy of crushing the Rohillas with the help of the Marathas and placing them in full control at the capital. Since his arrival in Delhi the Emperor had persistently tried to keep the Marathas in power. In the Doab the only serious hitch in the path of Maratha domination

was the dynasty of Najib. Zabitah Khan had been defeated by the Emperor with the help of the Marathas, and the members of his family including Ghulam Qadir had fallen into the hands of the victors. During his stay in the court the young Rohilla boy was not treated well, and he was ever haunted by the idea of the souls of his father and grandfather reproaching him for not avenging the wrongs inflicted upon the family by the Emperor and his Maratha allies. He considered himself to be the "scourge of God" for the "disgraceful occupant of the throne." Ghulam Qadir could not have completely dissociated himself from the traditional attitude of his family towards the Marathas and their domination over the Mughul Emperors.

There is evidence on record to show that the leading Muslims were against the Emperor falling into the hands of Marathas. Shah 'Abdul Hadi of Amroha, an influential and pious shaikh in the district of Moradabad, which was the stronghold of the Rohilla chief, Dunde Khan, was in correspondence with the Emperor. He is stated to have suggested to Dunde Khan that he should undertake the task of escorting the Emperor from Allahabad to Delhi. But before this could materialize the Rohilla chief died (1770).¹ The incident is important because it indicates that military chiefs as well as the religious leaders of the Muslims were fully alive to the need of saving the Empire from the control of the Marathas, the Sikhs or any other non-Muslim people.²

Ghulam Qadir was the last Muslim chief to have

¹ *Miftah-ul-Khazain*, p. 171.

² It may be added here that Shah 'Abdul Hadi was personally present at Panipat in 1761 to offer prayers for the victory of the Muslims. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

Similarly we find that another well-known shaikh, Shah Fakhr-ud-din, who, in the words of Syed Ahmed Khan, was the spiritual guide of the contemporary rulers and nobles (*Asar-us-Sanadid*, p. 32), had told Shah 'Alam to "direct his attention to them (Sikhs) because in that action lay the prosperity of this world and that of the next." *Takmilah-i-Siyarul Aulia*, p. 117, (as quoted in *Mashai-nkha-i- Chisht*, p. 447).

influence in Delhi. With his fall Shah 'Alam and his Empire came under the complete domination of Sindhia. The Maratha supremacy was short-lived because only fifteen years later the British forces under Lake defeated Sindhia's army below the walls of Delhi and entered the capital in triumph (September 1803).

Even before the fall of Delhi Shah 'Alam had secretly been approached by the British government with a promise that if he accepted their offer of protection "every demonstration of respect and attention would be paid towards His Majesty on the part of that government and that an adequate provision would be made for the support of his majesty, and of his family and household."¹ Why Shah 'Alam readily accepted the offer and welcomed the British is not difficult to find. The representatives of Sindhia in whom he had placed his implicit confidence² had behaved most shabbily towards the Emperor and made his life miserable. He was made to live almost in destitute conditions. Nor was he shown the outward respect which he deserved because of his position. But he did not realize that the change would bring him little benefit, because he was now to become a mere pensioner, drawing Rs. 90,000 p.m. (which was later raised to one lakh). His jurisdiction was limited to the four walls of the Red Fort.

From a political and constitutional point of view it was a revolutionary change: Sindhia, however powerful, was the servant of Shah 'Alam and the Emperor, "though a pensioner and sightless was still

¹ Henry Beveridge : *A Comprehensive History of India*, London, 1872, II, 762.

² Shah 'Alam had gone to the extent of calling Sindhia his son. In his own *marstyah* he writes :

مادھوجی سندھیہ فرزند جگر بند من

ہست مصروف تلافی متکاری ما

considered the fountain of honour throughout India, equally by the Hindoos and Mohamedans, and a patent of nobility under his seal was as highly prized in the remotest province of the Deccan as had been in the days of Aurangzib.”¹ After the capture of Delhi this position was changed and the Mughul Empire ceased to be an effective political institution. Wellesley, though as anxious to have “the name and authority of the Mughuls” as Sindhia was, wanted Shah 'Alam to become a British pensioner. The actual position was that the governor-general laid emphasis on the Emperor's “restoration to a state of dignity and tranquility under the power of the British Crown”, while Shah 'Alam wrote “that hereafter there be no want of obedience or cause of dissatisfaction to me.”² To him the formal recognition of his superiority and the observance of traditional etiquette at the court by the Company's agent were important issues, and on these Wellesley yielded, allowing him full powers within the Fort. The agent behaved there exactly as others did. From the *Naqqarkhanah* onward he had to go on foot and attended the *darbar* regularly as a suitor. This was a concession to the feelings of the people for the institution. In these circumstances the old and sightless Shah 'Alam who had occupied the throne for thirty-six eventful years died, three years after Lake's entry in Delhi. He was succeeded by his eldest surviving son who assumed the title of Akbar Shah II.³

¹ J. C. Marshaman : *The History of India*, 1867, II, 87.

² *Twilight of the Mughuls*, pp. 35-36.

³ The story of Akbar II's reign and his relations with his 'protectors' will be discussed in another volume.

CHAPTER V

THE SIKHS

The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak (b. 1469) was one of the saints of the Bhakti movement. He tried to bring about a synthesis of Hinduism and Islam ; but, like most eclectics, he only succeeded in founding a new religion. It is difficult to say if he had a definite political programme, though later historians have read into his movement the motive of overthrowing the political domination of the Muslims. This seems doubtful, especially because of his great respect for the teachings of Muslim *sufis*, whose writings even today form part of the Sikh Bible, *Guru Granth Sahib*. There is, however, some evidence to believe that he was an opponent of the Lodis and had encouraged Daulat Khan to invite Babur.¹ As a reward he obtained from the victorious invader concessions of a substantial character.²

Nanak followed a policy of peace towards the Mughuls which was continued by his immediate successors, and their relations with the Mughul Emperors were cordial. Akbar's gift to the Sikh guru, Amar Das, and his appreciation of the latter's teachings are well-known facts of Mughul history.³ Sikh historians go further and assert that Babur and Humayun also paid visits to contemporary gurus.⁴ What-

¹ The Sikh historians Bhangwan Singh and Bhai Mani Singh have also mentioned this.

² Sikh writers do not admit that the guru accepted any material offering from Babur, and he is stated to have spurned it with these words :

کہہ نالک سن ہابر میر تجھ تے مانگے سوا حق فقیر

But there can be no doubt that he was given extensive lands which would be sufficient for the subsistence of several hundred families.

³ Latif, p. 3.

⁴ *Itihas Sikh Gurus*, p. 98.

Tawarikh Guru Khalsah, p. 360.

ever truth there may be in these statements, it is not difficult to establish that the early leaders of the Sikhs utilised every opportunity of demonstrating good will and friendliness towards the Muslims and their government, and it was not until the time of Jahangir that their attitude changed.

Nanak was succeeded by Angad who died in 1552. The third guru Amar Das was able to carry the movement forward because he was able to obtain the patronage of Akbar. He divided his estate into twenty-two parts like the provinces of the Empire.¹ Nairang is right in commenting that this measure "must have gone a long way in strengthening the foundations of the Church and in carrying on the propaganda in all parts of the country. We shall see later on how the fifth guru built on these foundations the beautiful edifice of self-government in the heart of the Mughul empire."²

The next guru Ramdas received from Akbar an extensive *jagir* in which he built the town of Amritsar which has since remained the centre of the religious and political activities of the Sikh community.³ Another important step taken by him was that he strengthened his relations with Hindu chieftains in his neighbourhood.

Arjun who succeeded his father in 1581 was the first leader of the Sikh community to change its character. He improved the city of Amritsar by erecting new buildings and founded another town bearing the name Taran-Taran. He raised the worldly prestige of the guru, began to call himself *Sachcha Badshah*, and collected taxes through his agents who were appointed by him for this purpose.⁴ Arjun's assumption of the royal title, particularly with the epithet *Sachcha*, hinted though indirectly that Jahangir was not the true *Badshah*. This

¹ *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 55.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 56-59.

³ *Tawarikh Guru Khalsah*, Part I, pp. 87-88.

⁴ *Dabistan-ul-Mazahib*, Lucknow ed., p. 233.

could not have remained unnoticed; in addition Arjun rendered active assistance to Khusrau during his rebellion. The Emperor was known for his toleration and friendliness towards non-Muslim spiritual teachers,¹ and would not have passed strictures in the *Tuzuk* if the Sikh guru had not indulged in political activities.²

That Arjun was punished for an act of treason is beyond doubt and certainly he "would have ended his days in peace if he had not espoused the cause of a rebel."³

But the incident is significant if read in the light of later history of the Sikhs, because it was the starting point of the Sikh-Mughul conflict, which developed in course of time into communal hostility between Sikhs and Muslims. The consequences of this mutual animosity were terrible and for more than a century and a half the Panjab and neighbouring territories experienced atrocities which have shocked the conscience of humanity. Some writers have rather uncritically blamed the Mughul government for this. But a critical study of Sikh activities from the time of Guru Arjun onward will show that they aimed at having an *imperium in imperio*.⁴ Obviously no government could have tolerated this attitude. Mughul policy was characterized by tolerance, and, in spite of their undesirable activities, the Sikhs as a community were not penalized. Specific acts of a criminal or treasonable nature, however, had to be dealt with severely. The Mughul government had to protect the life and property of peaceful and law-abiding citizens.

¹ For instance with Jadrup ; the Emperor out of regard for him walked on foot for a quarter of mile. (*Tuzuk*, pp. 75-76, 251).

² *Tuzuk*, p. 34.

³ Beni Prashad : *History of Jahangir*, third edition, 1940, p. 130.

⁴ Speaking of Arjun's successor, Hargobind, a modern writer says : "thus, by this time, the Sikhs came to occupy a kind of separate state within the Mughul Empire the position of which was securely established by the fiscal policy of Guru Ramdas and the martial system of Guru Hargobind." (*Studies in Later Mughul History of the Panjab*, p. 37).

The next guru, Hargobind, openly became a "military leader as well as a spiritual teacher,"¹ and during his pontificate the aims and policies of the Sikhs became clear. He took service with Jahangir and accompanied the royal camp to Kashmir. But he was soon "involved in difficulties with the Emperor about retaining for himself that money which he should have disbursed to his troops."² The Emperor was displeased and Hargobind was imprisoned in the Fort of Gwalior. He remained there for twelve years after which Jahangir, moved by pity and kindness, ordered his release.³

Hargobind's successor was his grandson Har Rai whose otherwise peaceful pontificate (1645-1661) was marked by his active support of Dara during his flight after Samugarh.⁴ He was forgiven by the magnanimous 'Alamgir I but was asked to send his son to court. "The youth" Cunningham admits, "was treated with distinction and soon released....." On Har Rai's death his minor son, Har Krishen, was recognized guru by the Emperor, but before he could leave Delhi, he died of small-pox. The next guru was Tegh Bahadur, son of Hargobind. He "followed the example of his father with unequal footsteps, and subsisted himself and his disciples by plunder " He is stated to have joined hands with a "Mahometan zealot named Adam Hafiz, and to have levied contributions upon rich Hindoos, while his confederate did the same upon

¹ Hargobind armed his followers, maintained a stable of 700 horses, dressed himself in princely attire and held a *darbar* like a king. He "grasped a sword and marched with his devoted followers among the troops of the empire, or boldly led them to oppose and overcome provincial governors or personal enemies." (Cunningham : *History of the Sikhs*, second edition, London, 1853, p. 53).

² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

³ According to *Dabistan-ul-Madhahib* the reason of imprisonment was the non-payment of dues from the time of Arjun, Lucknow edition, p. 234 ; Khush-waqt Singh says "non-payment of land revenue owed by his father." (*The Sikhs*, p. 28).

⁴ *Tawarikh-Guru Khalsah*, Part I, pp 132-34 ; Cunningham mentions his support of Dara "being of a nature not distinctly laid down." (p. 59).

⁵ Cunningham, p. 59.

wealthy Mussulmans."¹ This evidently could not be tolerated and the Emperor had to take drastic action. The story of the guru's execution has become and perhaps will ever remain a subject of controversy. 'Alam-gir I has been accused by some writers of persecuting the Sikhs; but a critical examination of contemporary evidence reveals the fact that the Emperor simply wanted to punish Tegh Bahadur for his lawlessness and was at no stage anxious to exterminate the Sikhs as a community. Tegh Bahadur had "openly defied the Emperor",² and resorted to violence, leaving for the government no option other than the course which was followed.³

No steps were taken against the Sikhs so long as they confined themselves to peaceful activities. 'Alam-gir's hands were already too full with other problems and he could ill afford to create new ones by persecuting the Sikhs.⁴

At the time of his succession to the guruship Govind Singh was a youth of fifteen.⁵ He spent the first few years in retirement and study, although it appears that the idea of avenging his father's death, was always present in his mind. It was this personal grievance rather than anxiety to save his followers from extinction that had made him an inveterate enemy of the Mughuls, for as things stood nothing was being done by the latter to crush the Sikh community as such. However, after remaining in obscurity for about twenty

¹ *Ibid*, p. 62.

² J. N. Sarkar in *Cambridge History of India*, IV, p. 245.

³ According to an oft-quoted but unreliable story the guru having been asked by the Emperor to show some miracles wrote out a charm, placed it around his neck and said that the sword would be ineffective against its powers. Then he lowered his neck which was cut by a blow of the sword, much to the surprise of the court. When the charm was opened it was found to contain the words: "he had given his head but not his secrets." After referring to this story Cunningham opines, "Yet it is more certain that Tegh Bahadur was put to death as a rebel in 1675," p. 63.

⁴ For a fuller discussion see Faruki, *Aurangzib*, Chap. X.

⁵ Ten years, according to Khushwaqt Singh, *The Sikhs*, p. 28.

years he came out in public, took to an active life and introduced reforms which changed the entire character of his community, and, to use Cunningham's words, "in the heart of a powerful Empire he set himself to the task of subverting it....."¹ This was an impossible task but the tradition left by him did in course of time become an effective element of disruption, which later contributed to the disintegration of the Empire. He made his community one of the most dangerous and implacable enemies of the Mughul Empire and of the Muslim people. He did all that lay in his power to make his community a militant sect and therefore "constantly drilled his followers, gave them a distinctive dress and a new oath of baptism, and began a course of open hostility to Islam. He harangued the Hindus to rise against Muslim persecution and severely put down the adoration of Muhammadan saints to which Sikhs and many Hindus were addicted."²

He started by setting up military posts along the edge of the hills between the Sutlaj and the Jumna and tried to induce the hill rajas to join him in his proposed campaign against the government. When they refused to join hands with him "the Sikhs who had already tasted the joys of plunder ransacked the territories of the impotent but insolent chiefs and reduced their subjects to a state of starvation by carrying away everything they could lay their hands upon."³ 'Alamgir I having been involved in the South in a seemingly interminable conflict, Govind Singh's predatory activities could not receive the attention which they demanded. However orders were issued to the governors of Lahore and Sirhind to suppress the lawless Sikhs. Their stronghold at Anandpur was captured, but the guru

¹ P. 65.

² J. N. Sarkar, *Cambridge History of India*, IV, 246.

³ G. C. Nairang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 152. This view is corroborated by other writers also. See for instance *Tawarikh-i-Guru Khalsah*, Part I p. 151.

escaped and fled towards Chamkaur. When this was also attacked he again took to flight, disguising himself as a Muslim *faqir*. Ultimately he reached Damdama,¹ not far from Firuzpur, where he spent some time in composing "the supplemental Grunth, the Book of the Tenth King, to rouse the energies and sustain the hopes of the faithful." During this period of retirement he was forgiven by the Emperor for his past deeds against the state and was summoned to court. He was still on his way to the South when the Emperor died.

After the surrender of Gobind Singh the Sikhs had ceased to be a serious problem for the Mughuls. The prestige of the government was re-established so thoroughly that during his flight not only was the Guru deserted by all but a handful of his followers,² but there is also evidence to show that attempts were made to depose him, and that the most trustworthy of his comrades, the Manjha Sikhs, had also advised him in these words : "For a *faqir* it is unwise to fight with kings; if you permit us we shall present ourselves before the emperor and beg for peace for you." After Alamgir-I, however, the Sikhs were gradually able to revive their power and resume their activities against the government. Bahadur Shah's relations with guru Govind Singh were on the whole cordial. He was treated by the Emperor respectfully and according to some writers was given a military command. But he did not enjoy this position for long, because a few

¹ The story is related that in the course of his flight the Guru was once overtaken by a band of Mughul pursuers. The bearers of the *palki* said that they were carrying the *pir* of Uchha, a respectable figure in the area. The Mughul soldiers 'took the *pir* to their camp and entertained him with a feast. According to Cunningham, whose version is slightly different, near the town of Buhlulpur 'he trusted his persons to a..... follower of Islam, one Peer Mahomed, with whom, it is further said, the guru had once studied the Koran. Here he ate food from Mahomedans, and declared that such might be done by Sikhs under pressing circumstances.' (p. 77).

² *Twarikh-i-Guru-Khalsah-Panth*, p. 846, *Itihas-Guru-Sahiban*, p. 394, *Prachin-panth-Parakash*, p. 36.

months later he was assassinated by the sons of Payindah Khan.¹

Bahadur Shah's mildness did not prove of any advantage to the Mughuls, because Banda,² on whom had devolved the leadership of the community after Govind's assassination, raised the standard of revolt. He marched on Sirhind, plundering a number of places on the way. The shocking details of Sikh atrocities at Samana,³ Ambala, Kunjpura, Mustafabad, Mukhlispur, Chatta and other places can be read in all histories including those written by the Sikh and Hindu writers.⁴ At last in 1710 not far from Sirhind he met in battle its governor, Wazir Khan. The latter had under-estimated the strength of the Sikhs and therefore precipitated action without adequate forces. His followers fought bravely but they were defeated and Wazir Khan was killed. "The city of Sirhind was given to plunder," remarks G. C. Nairang, "and the Mohammedans were ruthlessly massacred without any distinction of sex or age."⁵ Another modern writer adds that "the town was razed to the ground and the entire Muslim population put to the sword."⁶ He ousted Mughul officers from the

¹ Gobind Singh had killed Payindah Khan on the latter's demanding the price of horses, which he had bought from him. See Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 79. According to Khafi Khan "his murderer was not discovered," Elliot, VII, 413,

A rumour holds "Gul Khan, a grandson of a man, Paindah Khan, whom a former guru, Har Gobind, had killed," as the murderer of Govind Singh. See, *The Sikhs* by J. C. Archer, 1946.

² He came from the South and had joined Govind Singh when the latter was there in the Emperor's Camp. He became one of his trusted disciples and the guru appealed to him "to take up his work, avenge the blood of his father and his innocent children and strike a blow at the Mughul despotism." (*Transformation of Sikhism* ; pp. 171-75.)

The author of the *Tawarikh-i-Guru-Khalsah* adds that Govind Singh had sent 25 of his devoted followers with Banda and addressed a letter to the Sikhs to accept him as their leader. (See *Shamshir Khalsah*, Part II, p. 7).

³ "Nearly 10,000 Muslims are said to have been massacred in this town" (H. R. Gupta, *Studies in Later Mughul History of the Panjab*, p. 46).

⁴ *Tawarikh-i-Guru-Khalsah*, Part II, pp. 8-9, *Transformation of Sikhism*, pp. 174-76, Brown, *India Tracts*, pp. 9-10.

⁵ *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 178.

⁶ Khushwaqt Singh ; *The Sikhs*, p. 48.

parganahs of Sirhind and put his own men instead.¹

This was not the end of his depredations. He carried his campaign of plunder and loot in the East up to Deoband and Sharanpur, and in the West to the vicinity of Lahore.² On hearing of these activities of Banda, Bahadur Shah decided to march in person against the Sikhs. But before his arrival at the scene his general Mahabat Khan defeated Banda in a battle near Aminabad. The Sikhs were killed in large numbers but their leader escaped. Another battle was fought near Sultanpur in which Banda was again defeated. From here too he escaped alive. The Mughuls continued the pursuit and forced him to retreat into the hilly tract of Jammu. Bahadur Shah who had arrived in Lahore died in February 1712. The war of succession that ensued after his death gave the Sikhs an opportunity of recouping their strength and building a stronghold at Gurdaspur. Banda came out of the hills, resumed his lawlessness and again attacked and plundered Sirhind.³ Batala was the next place to be sacked and burnt and after this Lahore was also plundered by the Sikhs.⁴

These atrocities opened the eyes of the Emperor Farrukh-Siyar and he decided to take strong measures against Sikh lawlessness. Abdus-Samad⁵ was called from Kashmir and placed in charge of the campaign against Banda. He forced the enemy to retreat within his stronghold of Gurdaspur. The Mughuls pressed the siege so hard that Banda could get nothing from

¹ Khafi Khan, II, 652.

² Near Sadaurah the Muslims were indiscriminately cut to pieces in a mansion which came to be known as Qatlgarhi (K. K. II, 654-57).

³ For an account of Sikh atrocities in this town see Latif, *History of the Punjab*, pp. 52-53, *Tawarikh-i-Guru-Khalsah*, part II, p. 14. Cunningham disagrees with this view and says "but the city does not seem to have fallen a second time a prey to the exulting Sikhs" (p. 85). The *Faujdar* of Sirhind was killed by a Sikh fanatic when offering prayers. See *Siyar* II, 26.

⁴ Latif, p. 54.

⁵ For Abdus-Samad see *Ma'thir-ul-Umra*, II, 514-17.

outside and "after consuming all his provisions, and eating horses, asses, and even the forbidden ox, he was reduced to submit."¹ Many Sikhs were taken captive along with their leader and after being paraded in the streets of Lahore were sent to Delhi.²

For about two decades (1716-38) after Banda's fall the Sikhs faded into obscurity, most of them finding refuge in the hills or in the woods south of the Sutlej. But in the confusion created by Nadir's invasion they again came out of their retreats, formed themselves into small bands and took to plundering once more. They are even stated to have attacked the stragglers of the invader's army.³ Zakariya Khan the energetic governor of the Panjab sent small columns in pursuit of the Sikh marauders and drove them towards the Jullundur Doab. He appointed Adina Beg as *nazim* of this district with instructions to restore order. But he did not crush the Sikhs although in the words of Diwan Bakhtmal "if he had intended to do so, it was not a difficult task."⁴ On the contrary he encouraged the Sikhs because if the disturbances were brought to an end "there would remain no necessity for continuing him in so extensive a command."⁵ Zakariya, determined upon taking strong action imprisoned, Adina Beg and placed his younger son Shah Nawaz in charge of the Jullundur Doab. The Sikhs were driven towards the hills but only to come out again on the death of the Khan (July 1745). The latter's son and successor, Yahya Khan, was harassed by his younger

¹ Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 85-86.

According to some estimates the original number of Sikh forces was 35,000 but by the time that the siege of Gurdaspur began they had been reduced to 10,000.

² The number of the captives brought to Delhi and killed under the orders of the Emperor is given as 740. Farrukh Siyar was not a cruel man but it was necessary to put the captives to death to restore the prestige of the machinery of law and order. See Elphinstone's *The History of India* (seventh edition, 1889), p. 686.

³ Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 91.

⁴ *Khalsah-Namah*, pp. 58-59.

⁵ James Brown, *India, Tracts II*, 14 (as quoted in *Studies*, p. 61).

brother, Shah Nawaz, who rose in rebellion and seized power in the Panjab. To strengthen his position Shah Nawaz sent a message to Ahmad Shah offering him the Crown and retaining the *wizarat* for himself. The Afghan ruler seized this opportunity and marched into the subcontinent. The young and impulsive Shah Nawaz had in the meantime changed his idea and influenced by a letter from the *wazir* he was now ready to oppose the invader. The story of Ahmad Shah's campaign is given in another chapter but it may be mentioned here that the Shah's retreat gave the Sikhs "an opportunity of harassing his rear and of gaining confidence in their own powers."¹

Mu'in-ul-Mulk, popularly known as Mir Mannu, who was now appointed governor of the Panjab, was the son of the *wazir* Qamar-ud-din Khan. He was a brave and capable young man who had distinguished himself in the battle fought between Shah Abdali and the Imperial forces. Like Zakariya Khan he was determined to crush the forces of disorder and to restore peace in the Panjab. He sent strong contingents against the Sikhs forcing them to take shelter behind the walls of their newly-built fortress at Ram-Rauni (now known as Ramgarh) not far from Amritsar. The Sikhs were defeated but they were granted rather generous terms at the intercession of Mir Mannu's *diwan*, Kaura Mal. The governor's plans for the complete restoration of order were cut short however by the report of Abdali's arrival in the Panjab. Taking a realistic view of the situation Mir Mannu opened negotiations with the Shah and offered to pay him the revenues of four districts as they had been paid to Nadir Shah. Mu'ini's successes in war and diplomacy gained applause both in Lahore and the capital. The *wazir*, Safdar Jang, however, took a different view of the growing popularity

¹ Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 93.

of this young man and hoped to check it by appointing Shah Nawaz as the governor of Multan. Mu'in proved too strong for him and his *diwan*, Kaura Mal, defeated and slew Shah Nawaz. Through this foolish action of Safdar Jang the Mughul Emperor lost one of the biggest and most important of his provinces and the services of a capable and energetic official. But Mu'in was not destined to enjoy this position for long. In 1752 he was defeated by Abdali and his province became a part of the Shah's kingdom. The Shah however re-appointed him governor of his new province. The struggle for power in the Panjab between the two Muslim leaders naturally offered an opportunity to the Sikhs. They were, however, soon brought under control and in spite of Adina Beg's partiality for them Mu'in-ul-Mulk would have crushed them completely had he not died suddenly in 1753, soon after the invasion of Shah Abdali.¹ The widow of the deceased governor, Mughlani Begum, succeeded in securing the appointment of her infant son as his father's successor. She was careful enough to obtain a confirmation of this arrangement from Shah Abdali also through the latter's representative at Peshawar. This, however, could not save her from the wrath of the *wazir*, Imadul Mulk, who made her a captive and placed Adina Beg in charge of the province. In retaliation she asked² Abdali for help and he invaded the Panjab for the fourth time in the winter of 1755-56. Before returning to his own country Abdali appointed his son Timur as governor of the Panjab. He expelled the Sikhs from Amritsar, razing its forts to the ground and filling the sacred tank with the debris. But his success was only partial. He was not aware of the fact that

¹ Miskin gives an interesting eye-witness story of the sudden death of the governor.

² 'Ali-ud-din (quoted in *Studies in Later Mughul History in the Panjab*, p. 169).

Adina Beg had been secretly aiding and encouraging the Sikh insurgents. They assembled in large numbers around the city of Lahore, captured it and gave it up to plunder, forcing the Afghans to retire towards the Chenab.¹ Adina Beg knew that Abdali would not swallow this defeat of his son. With a view to safeguard his position, he took another unpatriotic step and called in the Marathas. The Marathas entered the province in March 1756 and carried their banner up to the banks of the Chenab.

The immediate return of Abdali after his victory at Panipat created conditions which enabled the Sikhs to assemble in large numbers and renew their raids on the neighbouring territory. The report of these activities of the Sikhs brought Abdali back to the subcontinent. He proceeded straight to Jandiala where the Sikhs had besieged the Hindu chief, Aqil Das with a large army. Despite their numbers they were so terrified to hear of the Shah's arrival that they hurriedly crossed the Bias and the Sutlej. Their flight, however, proved of little avail, since the Shah who had decided to crush the Sikh menace once and for all, pursued them until they were forced to offer battle in a village not far from Ludhiana. They fought stubbornly but they could not resist the charge of the sturdy Afghans. Many thousand of them were slain in the action and many were taken captive; only a small remnant managed to escape.² The rout of the Sikh army was so complete that it came to be known as *ghalooghara* or the great disaster. Among the prisoners was Alah Singh, the ancestor of the Patiala chiefs, who was forgiven by the Shah and honoured

¹ The Sikh leader struck rupee coins in the Mughul mint bearing the inscription, 'Coined by the grace of the 'Khalsa in the country of Ahmad, conquered by Jussa the Kullal, Cunningham, p. 97.

² The Sikh losses have been variously estimated from 12 to 30 thousand. Misikin gives the number as 25,000. *Fall of the Mughul Empire*, II, 354-55.

with the rank of a raja.¹ The Shah is related to have avenged the desecration of the mosques by ordering the destruction of some of the Sikh buildings at Amritsar. When he reached Lahore he displayed as a proof of his victory fifty cart loads of Sikh heads which he had brought with him from the field of battle.²

After staying in Lahore for a few months and suppressing the Sikh marauders in the vicinity of that town, Abdali left it in the charge of Kabuli Mal and returned to Qandahar. It was unwise on his part to have left the subcontinent so soon. The Sikhs had been defeated and routed but they had not been crushed. Abdali had hardly turned his back when they renewed their activities. They siezed Qasur and ruthlessly plundered and massacred its Muslim inhabitants (May 1763). Maler Kotla was next attacked and although its Nawab offered a stiff resistance he was killed and the town was sacked with usual Sikh barbarity. Early in January 1764 they fell upon Sirhind, defeated and killed its governor, Zain Khan and gave the city up to plunder. According to some authorities Sikh atrocities in Sirhind far exceeded their previous brutalities in this unfortunate town³ In the following month they entered the upper Gangetic Doab which formed part of the *jagir* of Najib-ud-Daulah. In the words of Miskin "40000 of their horsemen crossed the Jumna and disturbed and looted the Saharanpur and Meerut districts. Nawab Najib Khan for a month or two, moved in every direction where Sikhs were reported to be roving, in order to protect the country, and fought and usually defeated them.

¹ The story is related that the Shah ordered his head to be shaved, but the Sikh captive made a request that he would pay a handsome amount for his hair. When asked by the Shah's men he said he was ready to offer a lakh of rupees. The Shah accepted this amount and let him go with his hair.

² Forester, J. 345; *Khazanah-i-Amrah*, p. 115.

³ Latif ; p. 81.

As they did not make a firm stand anywhere and offer battle he had to run about after them, but they did not give up their jackal tricks.”¹ In the Panjab they sacked Multan and Derajat and forced Kabuli Mal to cut the noses and ears of Lahore butchers.² On hearing reports of these excesses of the Sikhs, Ahmad Shah again decided to punish them. Assisted by the Baluch chief, Nasir Khan, he marched straight to Lahore. Not far from the city the Sikhs were attacked by the invader and routed in an open battle. The Shah marched on Amritsar but only to find that the Sikhs had abandoned their stronghold. Returning to Lahore he discussed with his chiefs plans for his future movements. It was decided that they should march eastward and relieve Najib from the pressure of the Jats. The Sikhs had in the meanwhile assembled in large numbers near the Guru Chak. They were again defeated by the Afghans on their homeward journey. Before leaving the subcontinent Shah Abdali showed his appreciation of Nasir Khan’s services by giving him Quetta.³

During the next five years (1767-72) Abdali invaded the Panjab thrice, but his policy of returning to his home-land immediately after his triumphs in battle left the Sikhs capable of endangering the peace and prosperity of that region. That Abdali’s policy lacked foresight is evident from the fact that in spite of his successive victories over the Marathas and the Sikhs he could not save the tottering structure of the Mughul Empire from collapsing. For a powerful potentate like Shah Abdali who had not only the goodwill of Hind-Pakistani Muslims but who was

¹ As quoted in *Studies*, p. 296.

² *Jang-Namah* (as quoted in *Studies*, p. 196).

³ The best account of this campaign is to be found in Nur Muhammad’s *Jang-Namah*. The author was in the company of the Shah during his campaign. The Khalsa College has published this on the basis of the Ms. belonging to the Khan of Kalat. See *Studies*, p. 197, n. 1.

actually supported by nearly all leading Muslim chiefs in the North it was not difficult to have arrested the process of disintegration because he was "the most likely person now in India to restore the ancient power of the Empire, should he assume the title of the King of Delhi."¹ He had seen with his own eyes the lawlessness created by the Sikhs in the Panjab, he had first-hand knowledge of the heart-rending atrocities to which the Muslims there were subjected and above all he knew that the structure of the Mughul Government was almost on the verge of collapse. Under the circumstances his responsibility as a powerful Muslim leader was quite obvious.

However within less than ten years of Shah Abdali's victory at Panipat and during the period of his repeated invasions of the Punjab the Sikhs were able to organize themselves into twelve *misls* or confederacies under various *sardars*.² Besides these *misls* "there was a body of men who threw off all subjection to earthly governors, and who peculiarly represented the religious element of Sikhism. These were the Akalees, the immortals, or rather the soldiers of God, who, with their blue dress and bracelets of steel, claimed for themselves, a direct institution by Govind Singh."³

The period of the supremacy of the *misls*, was an era of extremely difficult conditions of life for the Muslims of the Panjab. The founders of the *misls* with few exceptions such as the *Shahids* and *Nihangs*, were plunderers and had as such left to their successors no traditions of orderly and civilized government. For them the lives, property and honour of the Muslims had no sanctity. They were frequently plundered and massacred by the roving bands of the Sikhs and their shrines and mosques were desecrated most indiscriminately.

¹ Alexander Dow as quoted in *Studies*, p. 225.

² See, for instance, Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 106-109.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

Defenceless Muslims were tied in chains and forced to carry in their hands cups full of the blood of swine and throw it on to the walls of Muslim houses.¹

Born in 1746 Prince Timur had remained associated with the political and military activities of his father almost from childhood. On Abdali's death there was a contest for the throne between Timur and his elder brother. Timur ultimately triumphed and occupied the throne of his father until his death in 1793. The new monarch was temperamentally peace-loving but he was forced by circumstances to invade the Panjab within two years of his accession. He crossed the Indus on January 15, 1775 and defeated the Sikhs who wanted to check his advance. But difficulties nearer home did not permit him to proceed far into the Panjab and he had to return to Kabul where he had transferred the seat of government from Qandahar. In 1778 a small contingent sent by Timur to capture Multan defeated the Sikhs in a battle, but its leaders thought it advisable to retire to Peshawar. Timur now sent an envoy to negotiate with the Sikhs but in violation of diplomatic decorum they put him to death. This violation naturally annoyed the Afghan ruler and he immediately despatched a force of 18,000 under Zangi Khan who marched straight on Rohtas where the Sikhs were lying encamped and took them by surprise. They were defeated and sustained heavy casualties, both on the field of battle and during the course of pursuit by the victorious Afghans. In January 1780 Timur himself arrived near Multan and besieged the town. Leaving the main army here he went to Bahawalpur to secure reinforcements. When returning from there he met a Sikh force near Shujaabad and defeated it in a severely-fought action on February 8. The Sikhs lost 2,000 in slain and wounded and fled towards Lahore. They were pursued by the Afghans and were

¹ Brown ; *Indian Tracts*, pp. 25-27.

forced to offer battle at Hujrah Muqim Khan¹ where again they were defeated with heavy losses.

Timur now took Multan and entrusted it to the charge of Muzaffar Khan. He took about a fortnight to make the necessary arrangements and then left for his country.

After this Timur invaded the subcontinent three times during the next eight years but none of these campaigns was directed against the Sikhs.² He died in 1793 and was succeeded by one of his sons, Zaman Shah.³

Ranjit Singh's grand-father Charat Singh had, like most of his kinsmen, taken to a life of brigandage. He collected a following of 500 horsemen. At the time of his death his son Maha Singh was only a boy. He was however patronized and helped by another chief Jay Singh with whose assistance he captured the fort of Rasulnagar. On becoming strong and powerful he picked a quarrel with Jay Singh and killed him. He died in 1792 when his son Ranjit Singh was a mere lad of twelve. With the help of his mother-in-law he was able to take to an active life and extend his resources.

In 1799 Zaman Shah invaded the Panjab and defeated the Sikhs. He had to make a hasty retreat because his country was threatened by the Persians. On his way back he was faced with the problem of taking his guns across the Jhelum which was in spate. Ranjit seized the opportunity and offered his services to help

¹ At Shikhpurah according to Shamshir Khalsah, p. 114 (Quoted in *Studies*, p. 241).

² The three invasions were directed against—

(a) Nawab Bahawal Khan in 1780-81.

(b) the Governor of Kashmir in 1785.

(c) the Amirs of Sind in 1788.

³ Timur had left twenty-nine sons and nineteen daughters. (*Studies*, p. 266).

the Shah's men in crossing the river. In regard for this he was given a *sanad* for the government of Lahore as the representative of the Shah.¹

The acquisition of Lahore placed him in a position of great advantage : he now began to behave as an independent *sardar*. In the next two years he seized Amritsar and Kangra. As a vassal of Shah Zaman he maintained for a time friendly relations with other representatives of that monarch. But when the latter was blinded and deposed by his younger brother, Mahmud, Ranjit Singh seized the neighbouring districts of Jhang, Siyal and Multan.² These acquisitions carried his frontiers up to Sialkot in the north, Jullundur in the east and Multan in the south-west. In 1805 on his way to Hardwar he received *nazars* from the local Sikh *sardars* and landlords as if he was their suzerain. On his return he extended his authority to the banks of the Indus on the west and seized Ludhiana from a Muslim chief in the east in 1806. The *sardars* of Patiala and Nabha also offered *nazars* to him fearing that he might capture there states too. In the following year Ranjit Singh besieged Qasur and on its fall burnt and plundered the town in a most ruthless manner. This was followed by an attack on Multan, but its governor saved the town by giving a big *peshkash* for which he had to sell the precious articles in his palace. Bahawalpur was his next victim, but Bahawal Khan also succeeded in saving his State by offering him a *nazar*.

Of a number of Sikh principalities that lay between the Sutlej and the Jumna, Patiala was the most important. Ranjit Singh was now anxious to extend his authority over these States. In 1806 he was invited

¹ The author of the *Tawarikh Raj-Khalsah* has given a different version. According to him Ranjit Singh sent provisions to the Shah when the latter was in Gujranwalla and got in return the government of Lahore. See Part III, p. 62.

² Cunningham, p. 133.

to arbitrate in a quarrel between Patiala and Nabha. He crossed the Sutlej in October and forced the contesting parties to submit to his dictates. This did not remain unnoticed at Delhi, but "any apprehensions which were felt were removed by a letter professing profound respect for the British government

In the following year Ranjit again crossed the river on an invitation from the wife of the Raja of Patiala to settle the question of the assignment of revenue for her son. The Raja and his wife settled their quarrel and purchased Ranjit Singh's departure by presenting him a diamond necklace and a celebrated brass gun. On his return he sent a friendly letter to the governor-general in which he wrote : "the country on this side of the Jumna, except the stations occupied by the English is subject to my authority. Let it remain so." Minto instead of replying to him with a letter sent a mission to Lahore.²

Metcalf who was selected as the leader of the mission was a clever young man of twenty-four. He exhibited great patience and firmness in discharging his duties. In the beginning his reception was far from cordial. But in December 1808 "when Ranjit Singh was sunk in a prolonged debauch, he sent him a severely worded warning," which gave the Sikh chief a sudden shock and made his minister alert. They "tried to reconcile Metcalfe—to the eccentricities of their chief; but the English gentleman had answered with becoming firmness that, although the eccentricities were sufficiently apparent, he could not admit that they

1 A. H. Beveridge. *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, 830.

2 Earlier in the year 1808, the Sikh chiefs alarmed by the aggression of Ranjit Singh had sent a deputation consisting of the chiefs of Jind and Kaithal and the *diwan* of Patiala to Delhi to ask for British protection. They could not get any positive assurance from the British although an encouraging reply was given to the effect that "in the hour of need they would not be deserted." (Cunningham, p. 147).

furnished any justification for his conduct.”¹

Napoleon's entanglement in the affairs of Spain having now weakened the chances, if there had been any, of an invasion of India, Minto's government could afford to be more rigid in their demand for the restoration of Ranjit's conquests on the left bank of the Sutlej, because the Sutlej States were under British protection. A stronger argument was provided by the advance of a detachment under Colonel Ochterlony from the banks of the Jumna into Ludhiana. Arrangements were also made for the movement of a bigger force under general St. Leger to support this contingent.

Ranjit Singh now realized that the situation had become serious. He “abandoned his dreams of conquest and concluded on 25th April 1809 a treaty at Amritsar to establish perpetual amity between the British government and the State of Lahore.” It was agreed that the raja of Lahore would make no encroachments nor suffer any to be committed on the cis-Sutlej chiefs who had come under British protection, and the British on their part undertook to have no concern whatsoever with the raja's territories north of the Sutlej. Although one of the shortest treaties concluded by the British in this subcontinent it was never infringed by either party as long as Ranjit Singh lived, the reason obviously being that each respected the strength of the other.

Though barred against further expansion beyond the Sutlej, there were no obstacles in Ranjit Singh's way in making fresh acquisitions on his side of the river. During the next four or five years he seized territories and treasures by attacking the raja of Kangra, a Sikh *zamindar* of Wazirabad and the chief of Multan. He also took steps to reform his army. Impressed by the discipline of the British forces he

¹ John William Kaye : *Life of Metcalfe*, I, 290.

created regular battalions on the model of the Company's army and laid great stress on strengthening his infantry and artillery. His neighbours being too weak to resist him single-handed and too disunited to combine against him, Ranjit's policy of expansion continued without any obstruction. His wars were a means of replenishing rather than exhausting his treasury because of the indiscriminate exactions and pillage which were a regular feature of his campaigns.¹

The quarrels among the sons of Timur Shah provided an opportunity to Ranjit Singh to expand his dominions at the expense of Durrani territories in the subcontinent. Zaman Shah was deposed by his brother, Mahmud, who in his turn was defeated by another brother Shuja'. But it was not long before Mahmud recovered the throne forcing Shuja' to escape into the Panjab.

Ranjit Singh contacted Mahmud's *wazir*, Fath Khan, who had come to punish the governor of Attock and Kashmir for their assistance to the fugitive Shuja'. He offered his services in return for a sum of nine lakhs of rupees, a share in the plunder of Kashmir and certain other advantages. It seems neither party was genuinely interested in fulfilling its obligations, but Ranjit Singh turned the situation to his advantage by capturing Attock which pushed his frontier to the most strategic point on the Indus.

Another step that he took was to invite Shuja' to Lahore, promising him help in recovering his lost throne. His real purpose however in calling the exiled prince was to obtain the celebrated *Koh-i-Nur* which Shuja' had inherited from his father and now had with him.² How shallow Ranjit's protestations of

¹ *A Comprehensive History of India*, III, p. 277.

² Originally it was laid in the famous *Takht-i-Ta'us* of Shah Jahan; Nadir Shah had taken it to Persia. On his murder Abdali gained possession of the jewel.

friendship were, became apparent to the unfortunate Afghan when on the day following his arrival a demand was made for the precious diamond.

Shuja' gave an evasive reply and on this he was imprisoned in his residence; he and his family were deprived of the ordinary necessities of life and he was put to torture.¹ Ultimately he yielded and in addition to the *Koh-i-Nur* he handed over other jewels to his host.² According to Shuja's own account, 'Ranjit Singh came in person, and after friendly protestations he stained a paper with safflower, and swearing by the Granth of Baba Nanak and his own sword, he wrote the following security and compact : "That he delivered over the provinces of Kotah Gumalech, Jung Shawl, and Khull Noor to us and our heirs for ever, also offering assistance in troops and treasure for the purpose of again recovering our throne. We also agreed, if we should ever ascend the throne, to consider Ranjit Singh always in the light of an ally. He then proposed himself that we should exchange turbans, which is among the Sikhs a pledge of eternal friendship and we then gave him the *Koh-i-Nur*."³ However it soon became clear to Shuja' that all the promises made by the Maharaja were meaningless and he decided to get out of the hands of his faithless host. In 1816 he managed to elude the vigilance of his guards and escaped to Ludhiana in disguise. He surreptitiously entered the public drain "and creeping through it till he arrived at the river side, he jumped into a boat which had been placed in readiness for him and escaped to Rajour, whose chief treated him with great

¹ According to the author of the *Tawarikh-i-Raj-Khalsa* Shuja and his family were kept hungry for several days and were thus starved into compliance, pp. 108-110.

² Cunningham ; *History of the Sikhs*, p. 153, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 128-130.

³ Quoted by H. Beveridge, II, 278.

kindness and hospitality.”¹ From Rajour he went to Kishtwar and with the help of its chief made an attempt to recover Kashmir. He defeated its governor Azim Khan but owing to the extreme severity of the weather could not turn his victory to any advantage, and was ultimately obliged to withdraw. It was after this failure to reconquer Kashmir that he seems to have resigned all hopes of his restoration to kingship. He therefore went to Ludhiana and stayed there under the protection of the East India Company.

After Shuja's escape Ranjit Singh resumed his policy of aggression and conquest. He was anxious to conquer Kashmir, but his first attempt met with a disastrous failure. He turned to Multan but there too he had to face disappointment in the first attempt in 1816. But two years later he undertook a second expedition and besieged the city. Its governor, Muzaffar Khan, offered a determined resistance but could not save its walls from incessant bombardment by the besiegers. When the brave old Muzaffar became certain that the citadel would ultimately fall, he came out with members of his family, including a young daughter, and fell upon the enemy. They were cut to pieces. On capturing the city the Sikhs burnt and plundered it for four days and the Muslim inhabitants had to face all kinds of barbarities.² It is stated that not less than five hundred buildings were reduced to ashes.³

Multan was the last important place in the Panjab to be captured by the Sikhs. For centuries it had been the cultural centre of Islam in Hind-Pakistan and served as the connecting link between the subcontinent and the Islamic world. It was but natural that the Sikhs

¹ *History of the War in Afghanistan*, ed. By C. Nash, London, 1843, pp. 54-55.

² *Tawarikh Raj Khalsah*, Part III, pp. 121-122. *Turikh-i-Panjab*, pp. 138, 139.

³ *History of the Sikhs*, p. 156.

celebrated its capture with great rejoicings; for the Muslims, however, it was a great blow.

In Afghanistan the assassination of the capable minister Fath Khan led to differences between his family and that of the reigning *amir*, Mahmud Shah. Ranjit Singh was anxious to extend his dominions beyond the Indus. His army had considerably improved in discipline under Ventura Allard.¹ He now marched westwards with the object of seizing the long-coveted valley of Peshawar. An small band of 5000 untrained but extremely zealous and devoted fighters met his army in the battle of Naushahra in 1823. In addition to superior discipline and training the Sikhs had numbers on their side, they outnumbered the Muslims in the proportion of four to one. The Sikhs were repulsed twice but ultimately succeeded in dislodging the decimated force of the defendants. "This battle" says Marshman "became memorable from the fact that a body of mountaineers and villagers, without any support from regular troops, but frantic with religious fanaticism, succeeded in baffling the exertions of more than four times their own number of the well-trained and disciplined Sikhs troops."² On entering the town the Sikhs gave the city up to plunder and carried their campaign of loot right up to the entrance of the Khyber.³

In spite of his victory Ranjit Singh found it difficult to bring Peshawar under his direct administrative control. Taking a realistic view of the situation he left it in the hands of its former chiefs on their engaging to acknowledge his supremacy and the payment of tribute.⁴ Yar Muhammad, brother of the well-known

¹ They had fought under Napoleon at Waterloo.

² *The History of India*, 1867, II, 379.

³ Cunningham : *History of the Sikhs*, p. 164.

⁴ Shuja's Diary, Chapter 27. Sohan Lal, Part I, pp. 99-104.

future *amir* of Kabul, Dost Muhammad was entrusted with its administration.

Shortly after this the Sikhs had to face the *mujahids* of Maulana Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, an account of whose work and achievement is given elsewhere.¹

¹ Chapters XVII and XIX.

CHAPTER VI

THE MARATHAS

Maharashtra, the Maratha homeland, forms a rough triangle lying between Nagpur, Daman and Goa.

The Marathas belong to Dravidian stock, although some of them have a slight admixture of Aryan blood. They form an ethnical and linguistic group; like other Hindus they are divided into various castes.

Maharashtra, on the whole, is a hilly region divided into three unequal parts of very dissimilar appearance. The Desh comprises of the north-western portion of the Deccan tableland with several ranges of rocky hills running from west to east. The soil of this region, except along the river banks, is sterile, and rainfall being scanty and uncertain discourages cultivation in times of strife. Even in normal times it does not yield wheat and rice but merely maize and millets. In between the tableland and the Arabian Sea stand the Western Ghats like a gigantic wall generally 4,000 feet high. The wall is broken by several passes including the famous Thal Ghat pass near Nasik and the Bhor Ghat pass near Poona. These passes connect the interior of the tableland with the port towns on the sea-coast. The Konkan is a narrow coastal land between the Ghats and the sea. Even this strip of land is not everywhere a flat plain, many parts of it are rugged and broken. Here as well as on the Ghats rainfall is abundant causing the growth of dense jungles. The entire terrain especially in the Ghats and the Konkan is hilly and rough and provides ideal conditions for guerilla warfare and robbery.

The upper basin of the Godavari and the Bina breeds sturdy horses. The people are hardy and

industrious. Maharashtra is traversed by important trade routes joining the east with the west and the north with the south.

Being of a turbulent disposition, like most people living in hilly regions, and discouraged by the barrenness of their soil and the uncertainties of rainfall in the Desh vast sections of the Marathas looked to highway robbery and coastal piracy for a living. The organizers and leaders of such expeditions became petty chieftains and constructed most of those forts which attracted attention in Shivaji's time and made him so formidable to his opponents. Robbery was sanctified by religion.

The establishment of the Bahmani dynasty in the Deccan brought under one government almost the entire mass of the Maratha population. The strong rule of capable monarchs of that Kingdom exercised considerable restraining influence on the lawless activities of the Marathas but failed to uproot their instinctive anarchical tendencies.

Muslim rulers employed the Marathas in their armies, mostly as infantrymen. The weakness of the Maratha trooper was indiscipline and want of physical courage, which, however, was recompensed by his constant vigilance and unfailing alertness. He showed his worth in surprises and night attacks, and was outstanding in harassing the enemy by cutting off his supplies and exhausting his resources.

The Marathas particularly distinguished themselves in the forces of Malik 'Ambar. While operating under his command they gave a better account of themselves than when they fought later either under Shivaji or Baji Rao who were always shy of open battles.

When Shah Jahan came to terms with Muhammad 'Adil Shah in 1636 putting an end to the Nizam Shahi dynasty, there followed twenty years of respite which should have restored peaceful conditions but Maharashtra

was not an ordinary land. The Marathas had evolved a pattern of life which they were loath to give up for a humdrum life of peace. Shivaji was Maharashtra's reply to Shah Jahan's policy of introducing Akbar's principles of government into the Deccan.

Later Hindu writers have extolled Shivaji as a great patriot and the spear heads of Hindu opposition to Alamgir's religious policy. He was primarily a product of the anarchical environment in which his genius, so truly representative of Maratha character, blossomed. His Hindu patriotism did not restrain him from depredations against fellow Hindus. The policy established by him never lost its predatory character.

The 'Adil Shahis did not understand the full significance of Shivaji's rise to power. In the beginning they looked upon him as a potential ally against the Mughuls; later their power collapsed so rapidly that they found themselves helpless. 'Alamgir should have turned his attention earlier to the Maratha menace, it was unwise to take Shivaji's proffered submission seriously. He should have been pursued relentlessly and his power uprooted before it had established itself.

When Shivaji died in 1681 his authority was not installed indisputably even in the lands which have been called *Swarajya*. His principal achievement was the unification under his own guidance of all the lawless elements of his country. By his daring and skilful leadership he had converted them into a compact mass of ardent followers attached to his person. His second contribution was the lowering of the morale of his victims, many of whom being repeatedly deprived by his men of the fruits of their labour, lost their faith in the values of honest life, and joined his gang to earn a livelihood by plundering others.

The Maratha problem did not receive adequate attention from the Mughuls until Shivaji harboured an illustrious refugee from the imperial house who claimed

nothing less than the whole Empire. Prince Akbar, the rebel son of 'Alamgir, finding Rajput support ineffective repaired to Shambhuji in 1681 and lived with him until he lost all hopes of success in India and embarked for Persia. In the meantime 'Alamgir himself had arrived in the Deccan. Bijapur was compelled to capitulate in September 1686, Golconda was conquered in October 1687, and Shambhuji was captured and killed not before the spring of 1689. The Maratha menace was however, not overcome. Swarms of Marathas operating under leaders, owing no common allegiance, would swoop down on the Mughuls from time to time. The trouble from the very beginning assumed formidable dimensions. Several Imperial commanders were killed and captured while attempting to suppress these acts of robbery.

On the death of 'Alamgir, Shahu, then a prisoner in the camp, was released by Prince A'zam on Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan's advice. Tara Bai, the widow of Shivaji's second son, Raja Ram, who then occupied a dominant position in the affairs of the Marathas, refused to recognize him as Shambhuji's son and prepared to resist his pretensions by force of arms. Overcoming certain initial difficulties he captured Satara and proclaimed himself ruler of the Marathas. Tara Bai, defying his authority and affirming the claims of her own son, selected Kolhapur, near the great fort of Barnala, as the place of her residence. There were now two pretenders to Shivaji's *gaddi*, dividing among themselves the allegiance of the Marathas. A civil war ensued.

Jahanddar Shah had appointed Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan his viceroy over the six provinces of the Deccan. The latter ruled through a deputy named Daud Khan who made an arrangement with the Maratha leaders of Shahu's party and succeeded in maintaining order throughout the greater part of the peninsula.

Daud Khan was replaced after Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan's

execution by Farrukh-Siyar. The viceroyalty of the Deccan was conferred by the new Emperor on the Nizam whose family was destined to play an important and long role in its affairs. He reversed the policy of Daud Khan whose arrangements had greatly bolstered Shahu's prestige, and had lent him support in his struggle against his Kolhapur cousin. Soon after Daud Khan's removal, the Marathas resumed their devastations during which Chandra Sen Jadav, the son of Dhanaji Jadav, who had joined Shahu, quarrelled with the latter's new favourite, Balaji Vishvanath and joined the Kolhapur party whom the new viceroy supported. The Marathas of Shahu's party fought a battle with the Nizam in which they were worsted and compelled to confine their depredations within the limits of Maharashtra making conditions there horrific.

All *desh-mukhs* and *deshpandyas* fortified their villages and engaged themselves in robbery. Every brigand at that time, irrespective of his affiliation with Shahu or his cousin, would invariably assist another brigand in escape, defence and concealment. A Brahmin named Krishna Rao of Khatar on his own initiative and without joining either party roamed the Mahadeo hills. One Damaji Thorat, who neither acknowledged Shahu nor his cousin's authority, having strengthened the fort of Hingangan, plundered the whole country within a radius of thirty miles. He was strong enough to seize and put under arrest Balaji Vishvanath with his two sons and several retainers. Shahu had to pay a large ransom to obtain their release.

Another Maratha Udaji Powar had become strong enough to exact from Shahu the *chauth* of two important places.

Some Marathas were pirates. The most formidable of all these brigands was Kanhoji Angria. He defeated and captured Shahu's Peshwa, Bahiro Pant Pingle, and occupied several important places. He was about to march on Satara and depose Shahu when

Balaji Vishvanath was sent against him. He brought about a compromise, in appreciation of which Shahu appointed him as his Peshwa.

These internecine quarrels would soon have exhausted the Marathas and indirectly helped the cause of peace. But the appointment of Balaji Vishvanath as Shahu's Peshwa was to prove the harbinger of a new era.

The Sayyid brothers raised Farrukh-Siyar to the throne and kept all power in their own hands; they entered into an agreement with the Marathas, anticipating a trial of strength with their rivals in the court, particularly the Turani nobles. They granted to Shahu three *sanads* in March 1719, a few days after Mohammad Shah's accession, when they were still occupying a dominant position in the affairs of the state. One of these conferred Shivaji's possessions, at the time of his death in 1681, on his grandson who promised a *peshkash* of ten lakhs in return for the dominion. This was Shahu's *Swarajya* and gave him the status, in the Mughul Empire, of a tributary Prince. The other two *sanads* conferred on him the right of collecting *chauth* and *sardesh-mukhi* from the Deccan. The Maratha Raja promised in return to assist the Emperor's servants in suppressing lawlessness, and to maintain a contingent of 15,000 horse for his service.

On accepting the *sanads*, Shahu became legally and constitutionally a tributary prince, possessing heritable dominions and a servant and *mansabdar* of the Mughul Emperor. Everything on record leads to the inference that Shahu far from considering this position derogatory to his honour was proud of his status.

The recognition of these rights by the Mughul Emperor was, nevertheless, a triumph of Balaji's genius for intrigue and diplomacy. Without shedding a drop of Maratha blood and without spending a pie of his master's money he had secured for him a State and a homeland, and no less than 28% of the entire Imperial

revenue of the Deccan. The manner of dividing this newly acquired sources of income between leaders of different Maratha roving bands was an even greater achievement. It put an end to internal strife, instituted for them a vested interest all over the Deccan and created a common urge for expanding their activities. Balaji Vishvanath died in 1720, and was succeeded as Peshwa by his own son Baji Rao. He organized and directed Maratha expeditions with conspicuous success; his tactics shattered the administrative machinery in several provinces. He wrought much destruction and constructed little in its place.

The Maratha State has been aptly called a Robber State by Vincent Smith. Its administration was almost chaotic, and had no more elements of system than were necessary for the perpetuation of chaos.

Its finances were in confusion, the Peshwa's financial difficulties were no less acute than Shivaji's. Maratha campaigns were launched with loans but the proceeds seldom enabled them to discharge their debts. Creditors resorted to various methods of harassment to realise their dues. Financial worries and the insistent demands of creditors had a major share in the early deaths, of Baji Rao, and Balaji Rao.

The military achievements of the Marathas were not marked by deeds of chivalrous valour; when they were faced by determined opposition, they could make little headway. In the heyday of its power a petty chieftain like the Sidi of Janjira could conquer and hold Shivaji's capital, Raigarh; similarly Baji Rao himself was compelled to confess his helplessness when confronted by a Muslim nobleman of modest means like Yar Muhammad Khan of Bhopal. In bravery and courage a Mughul or a Pathan soldier proved his superiority over his Maratha opponents.

The Maratha campaigns of freebooting were always attended by appalling cruelty and the utter 'spoliation of the invaded territory. "When the Marathas,"

says Grant Duff, "proceeded beyond their territory, to collect revenue and to make war were synonymous. Whenever a village resisted, its officers were seized and compelled by threats, and sometimes by torture to come to a settlement". On such occasions according to the same writer, "...nothing was to be seen but perpetual skirmishing, murder and robbery in open day, caravans pillaged even when strongly escorted and villages burning and deserted".

"Maratha soldiers," as Jadunath Sarkar observes "were notorious for their practice of gang rape in invaded country from a very early time." Describing their atrocities and devastations in Bengal he has cited from several contemporary writers, both Hindu and Muslim. According to Ganga Ram : "they (Marathas) snatched away gold and silver rejecting every thing else; of some people they cut off the hands; of some the nose and ears ; some they killed outright. They dragged away the beautiful women, tying their fingers to their necks with ropes. When one Bargi had done with a woman, another seized her, the woman shrieked in agony of ravishment. The Bargis, after committing all sinful acts, set these women free. Then, after looting in the open the Bargis entered the villages. They set fire to the houses, large and small, temples and dwelling places. After burning the villages they roamed about on all sides plundering. Some victims they tied up with their arms twisted behind them. Some they flung down and killed with their shoes. They constantly shouted, 'give us Rupees, give us Rupees'. When they got no Rupee, they filled their victims' nostrils with water or drowned them in tanks. Some were put to death by suffocation. Those who had none had to give up their lives. It was only after crossing the Bhagirathi that people found safety".

The same authority referring to the third Maratha invasion of Bengal writes : "As soon as Bhaskar

arrived again, he summoned all his captains and ordered them, 'Draw your sword and kill every man and woman that you see. When the commander spoke thus, they plundered and slew on every side with shouts of 'Kill, Kill'. Brahmans Vaishnaus, Sanniyasis, women and cows were slaughtered by hundreds."

According to Vaneshwar Vidyalkar : "Shahu Raja's troops are niggard of pity, slayers of pregnant women and infants, of Brahmans and the poor, fierce of spirit, expert in robbing the property of every one and in committing every sinful act They rob all property and abduct chaste wives. If it comes to battle they secretly flee away to some other country. Their main strength lies in their swift horses. Such was the tumultuous ocean of Bargi troops."

The battle of Shakarkhelda established the rule of the Nizam and opened a new chapter in the history of the Deccan. Without challenging openly the right of the Marathas to collect *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* granted to them by the Emperor, he did his best to keep Maratha activities under control. He established his authority everywhere, leaving the *Swarajya* territories alone.

Shambhuji waited upon the Nizam and claimed an equal division of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* granted by the Emperor. The dispute was to be settled by him in his capacity as viceroy. Equity as well as custom sanctioned attachment of the allowance during the hearing of the dispute, and, consequently, agents of both sides were prevented from making collections. This was resented by Baji Rao who laid waste the district of Jalna.

Though he had taken the field first he did not have the courage to join battle either with the Nizam or his general 'Iwaz Khan. His plundering bands were beaten back again and again and he was relentlessly pursued wherever he went. Powerless against his adversary the Peshwa retaliated by burning and plundering

unprotected villages and towns. He had to leave the Nizam's jurisdiction to seek refuge in Gujrat. In the meantime Turktaz Khan had occupied Poona and besieged Raja Shahu in the fort of Purandhar. The whole Maharashtra submitted to the Nizam and was placed under Shambhuji's government. The Nizam was, however, disgusted with the Kolhapur party as well. Therefore, when Baji Rao opened negotiations for peace through 'Iwaz Khan the Nizam agreed to restore the *status quo*, disdainfully rejecting the Peshwa's suggestion that Shambhuji should be handed over to his enemies.

The Marathas suffered very severely during these operations from the fire of the Nizam's artillery. Baji Rao had been so thoroughly dealt with that until a few months before his own death in 1740 he did not stir again against the Nizam.

The Nizam marched to Delhi in July 1737 and remained absent from the Deccan until November 1740. During his absence the administration was creditably carried on by his second son Nasir Jang. Nadir Shah's invasion, the Nizam's long absence from the Deccan and finally the prosperous condition of his dominions offered a temptation which Baji Rao in his peculiar circumstances could not resist. His plundering expeditions against Malwa, Gujrat and other areas had again not brought him sufficient wealth to discharge his heavy debts; therefore he sought to replenish his resources by plundering the Nizam's dominions. The Marathas had raided Khandesh and Berar; in the winter of 1739-40 they began devastating the country south of Aurangabad. These acts of hostility brought Nasir Jang in the field. In spite of his youth and inexperience, he repelled Baji Rao's raiders and carried the war into Maratha country, and proceeded to sack Poona.

The Peshwa was soon tired of this war which far from bringing him any profit only increased his financial embarrassment. Humbled in the field and in mortal dread of his creditors at home, the

Peshwa, as Grant Duff puts it : "without visiting Poona or Satara, in great vexation, amounting almost to despair, set off with his army towards Hindustan".¹

The Nizam lived for eight years more but was seldom troubled by Baji Rao's son and successor, Balaji Rao. His death in 1748 brought an opportunity which the Marathas thought they could utilize to their advantage.

Nasir Jang succeeded him but was murdered before long by Himmat Khan, the Nawab of Karnool, at the instance of the French who raised to the viceroyalty of the Deccan first Muzaffar Jang and then, after his death, Salabat Jung. These circumstances encouraged Balaji Rao to interfere in the affairs of Hyderabad in the name of the Nizam's eldest son, Ghazi-ud-din then residing at Delhi and thus war between himself and Salabat Jung was precipitated. Maharashtra was invaded by the latter and his French allies, and the Marathas were worsted in every engagement. Balaji Rao was surprised and put to flight, he lost many of his troops and possessions including idols and gold plate. A truce was concluded when the Mughuls reached Poona. Salabat Jang had not inherited his father's ability, and power was exercised by different regents at different times. Samsam-ud-Daulah Shah Nawaz Khan, the celebrated author of *Ma'asir-ul-umara* was the best known of these. He was a strong man and his orders were respected by all, including the turbulent Maratha leaders, from several of whom, such as Raghuji Bhonsla, he exacted tribute. But the weakness of Salabat's character was to prove disastrous. The French quarreled with the patriotic Shah Nawaz who was removed from his office and imprisoned. Subsequently during the Seven Years War they had to

¹The following lines taken from a letter written by Baji Rao to his Mahaporush and quoted by Grant Duff in a foot-note describe his worry and disappointment at the time of his death : "I am involved in difficulties ; in debt, and in disappointment, and like a man ready to swallow poison, near the raja—are my enemies—and should I at this time go to Satara they will put their feet on my breast. I should be thankful if I meet death."

withdraw their support and Ibrahim Gardi, with his numerous French trained battalions of artillery, went over to the Peshwa. The later's cousin Sadashiv Rao Bhao acquired the fort of Ahmadnagar, which was the Nizam's arsenal, by bribing its commandant. He invaded the Nizam's territory in January 1750. Separated from the main body of their troops, outnumbered, and outclassed in equipment Salabat Jang and his brother Nizam 'Ali met the Marathas. They derived full benefit from the treachery of Ibrahim Gardi whose artillery took a heavy toll of Mughul lives. This enabled the Marathas to dictate their own terms. Salabat Jang and Nizam 'Ali had to cede a large and important portion of their territories.

The price of Udgir was paid by the Marathas at Panipat in January, 1761 when Sadashiv Rao Bhao's ignorant trust, born of this easy victory, in the effectiveness of European methods of war led him to abandon the traditional Maratha technique. Before the end of the year Maharashtra was invaded by Nizam 'Ali. The Peshwa was compelled to sue for peace and relinquish a substantial portion of the gains of Udgir. The ultimate success of the Marathas in Gujrat and Malwa was as remarkable as their failure in the Deccan.

Soon after Muhammad Shah's accession the Nizam was summoned from the Deccan and appointed *wazir* of the empire. In addition to his charge in the Deccan he was appointed governor of Gujrat and Malwa which he was permitted to rule through his deputies, Hamid Khan and 'Azim Ullah Khan respectively. When he became disgusted with affairs at Court and went to Deccan without soliciting formal permission of the Emperor he was deprived of the government, of these two provinces. Mubariz-ul-mulk Sarbuland Khan was appointed the governor of Gujrat and Raja Girdhar Bahadur of Malwa. Up to that time Gujrat had been free from the menace of Maratha incursions.

Sarbuland Khan instead of proceeding to his charge appointed Shuja'at Khan as his deputy whose family commanded considerable local influence and who had discharged similar functions prior to the Nizam's appointment. The quarrel which ensued between Shuja'at Khan and Hamid Khan eventually enabled the Marathas to acquire a footing in the province. Overpowered by his opponent, Hamid Khan made a compact with a Maratha chief, Kanthaji Kadam. The two then surprised and killed Shuja'at Khan near Ahmadabad. The contest was continued by the deceased's brother, Rustam 'Ali Khan, who was then commandant of Surat and was engaged in a promising campaign against another Maratha chief Pilaji Gaekwar.

Rustam Ali Khan had collected 15,000 horsemen, 20,000 matchlockmen and bowmen and a strong force of artillery. His resources would have undoubtedly enabled him to triumph over his opponents but he entered into an agreement with Pilaji who in consideration of two lakhs of rupees promised to help him against Hamid Khan. Pilaji then made a similar arrangement with Hamid Khan. The intended betrayal was brought to Rustam 'Ali Khan's notice, who, however, failed to adopt the necessary precautionary measures and paid with his life the penalty of his heedlessness. The Marathas did not have the courage to fight openly against him. On the day of battle they first kept aloof, looking upon him silently when he, overpowering all resistance, entered Hamid Khan's camp. Indeed Kanthaji believing Hamid Khan's cause to be lost beyond hope of recovery, fell upon his camp and plundered it to his satisfaction, not sparing even articles of daily use. A worse fate awaited the victorious Rustam 'Ali Khan at the hand of his Maratha allies. Following Pilaji's advice he had foolishly pursued Hamid Khan's followers in their flight. When he came back he found no trace of his camp. Pilaji had

made a clean sweep of every thing including twelve elephants, horse, carriages, animals, stores of grain and above all guns and other military stores. What he could not carry he either destroyed or rendered useless.

Hamid Khan had fled from the field of battle when he met Kanthaji and he abused him heartily for not helping him against Rustam 'Ali Khan and for plundering his camp. Having lost every thing of his own, he took up residence in the Maratha Camp.

For two days after this engagement not a Maratha showed his face to the other side. In fact, on the day of battle many of them had left for their homes. Later thousands of them hearing of Shuja'at Khan's death flocked to Gujrat and started plundering. Rustam 'Ali Khan having lost every thing found himself surrounded by seventy to eighty thousand Marathas. Cutting off his supplies and having brought up several guns they resumed their offensive against him. Rustam 'Ali Khan's troops were decimated and began to desert him; at length he himself was killed in a hand to hand fight.

In the meantime Ahmadabad, the capital of the province and official residence of the provincial governor was attacked by rowdy crowds who emptied the government store houses of carpets and other precious commodities.

The Marathas spread all over the province plundering the country. They levied *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*, captured many rich persons and holding them to ransom collected vast sums of money. In many places people immolated their own wives and children. Hundreds of high born women threw themselves into wells to escape outrage.

In the course of collecting the *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* near Cambay the Maratha chiefs fell out amongst themselves. Hamid Khan, however, brought about a compromise.

In the above conflict Safdar Khan Babi and his followers had taken sides with Hamid Khan. Later

they joined Sarbuland Khan merely as skirmishers and could render Hamid Khan no assistance against Sarbuland Khan's regular army.

Kanthaji and Pilaji realizing their helplessness against Sarbuland Khan in the field of battle sent their men on plundering excursions.

Before long however, Sarbuland's firm rule bore fruit and they were compelled to leave his province.

Sarbuland Khan, however, did not have competent financial advisers and was in acute financial difficulties. When the subsidy promised to him by the court at the time of his appointment was discontinued, he was forced to give up his struggle against the Marathas with the result that all his successes proved abortive. The faction in power at court recalled him and appointed Abhay Singh in his place.

Malwa was placed under Raja Girdhar Bahadur in 1723. He consequently fought against the Marathas. Ultimately in 1730 he was killed in action.

Muhammad Khan Bangash took charge of Malwa in January 1731 and remained in that province until November, 1732. At the time of his appointment there was anarchy. A great part of the province had not been cultivated for a long time and nearly one hundred thousand Marathas were engaged, under Malhar Rao Holkar, Udaji Powar and Ranoji Sindhia in plundering the province. Within twelve months of his arrival the Marathas were expelled from Ujjain, Mandeshwar, Dhar and Dipalpur. Their newly built forts on the Narbada were destroyed, their raids were repelled. Powar lost two of his important forts to the governor and Holkar made off into the Jaipur territory. Muhammad Khan Bangash, in spite of his slender resources appeared to carry all before him. He was, however, not supported by the court and was replaced by Raja Jay Singh of Amber.

Khan Dauran who was in power at Delhi removed two highly capable Muslim officers, Sarbuland Khan

from the governorship of Gujrat and Muhammad Khan Bangash from the governorship of Malwa. The loss of these two provinces put Rajputana and northern India at the mercy of the Marathas.

Raja Jay Singh suppressed the Marathas. A meeting took place at Dholpur on 16th July, 1736 between Jay Singh and Baji Rao Peshwa who was accompanied by Ranoji Sindhia, Malhar Rao Holkar and Jaswant Rao Powar, the principal leaders of the Marathas then marauding in Malwa. They reached an agreement that the Marathas would not ravage the Imperial provinces and that Baji Rao would be appointed deputy governor of Malwa. As William Irvine says :

“Appearances were saved but no good followed. Marathas in no way refrained from their depredations. Compromise they ever treated as a sign of weakness and concession as an incentive to future demands”.

This arrangement gave the Marathas a permanent footing in Malwa and laid the foundation of their future states of Indore, Gwalior and Dhar.

In Gujrat Abhay Singh's failure was equally conspicuous, although for varying reasons he succeeded in capturing Baroda from the Marathas, whose leaders particularly Pilaji Gaekwar showed no disposition to leave him in peace. They were acquiring rich *parganahs* and important military outposts one after the other. Finding himself unequal to the task of overpowering his opponent in open fighting he secured Pilaji's murder through one of his emissaries.

Pilaji's brother Mahadaji retaliated by taking Baroda, which henceforth became the centre of the Gaekwar's power in Gujrat. Pilaji's son, Damaji, besides occupying many important districts of Gujrat, made incursions as far as Jodhpur thus forcing the Raja to abandon Gujrat to a deputy and concentrate his attention and resources in his ancestral dominions.

Abhay Singh was removed by an Imperial order from the government of Gujrat which was now conferred on Mu'min Khan (1735). But as the former's deputy would not withdraw from Ahmadabad the new governor sought Damaji's alliance. The two captured Ahmadabad by their joint efforts and assigned to themselves the revenues of the province in equal shares. This system continued up to 1743 when Mu'min Khan died.

'Abdul 'Aziz Khan and then Fakhr-ud-Daulah were appointed governor of Gujarat. The former could not assert his authority for want of sufficient forces, and the latter, having obtained some initial advantages was opposed by the Gaekwars in the name of Mu'min Khan's son and brother. He also failed to establish a hold on the province. The old dual system continued for a number of years. When Damaji Gaekwar was Peshwa's prisoner at Poona, Jawan Mard Khan Babi who had previously looked after the interests of Mu'min Khan's family acquired full possession over the city of Ahmadabad and for a time successfully resisted the attempts of the Marathas to recover it. In view of his small means, he had to surrender the city in 1755 when the province of Gujrat was finally lost to the Mughul empire, though several small Muslim chiefs continued to defy the Marathas.

Sa'adat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk, the governor of Oudh, on the appeal of the Raja of Bhadawar whose territories the Marathas had robbed and plundered, fell upon Malhar Rao Holkar, who having crossed the Jumna had laid waste the whole country between Etawah and Moti Bagh near Agra. Sa'adat Khan killed a number of the Marathas and the number of those who were drowned in the Jumna while attempting to cross it was still larger. Malhar Rao Holkar was himself wounded and three of his principal lieutenants were captured alive. Only a few of them reached Baji Rao near Gwalior in a wretched condition. The

news of Burhan-ul-Mulk's exploit sent a thrill of joy throughout the empire. He wanted to pursue the enemy but was detained by Khan Dauran, who himself had taken the field against the Marathas having at last realised the gravity of the situation. There were no troops in or near Delhi when Baji Rao appeared suddenly and created havoc. His followers terrorized and killed the Hindus who had collected to worship Kalkadevi in a temple near Delhi. Such forces as could be gathered were led by young and inexperienced officers and were badly defeated. The news of these happenings brought back the *wazir* and other nobles to the capital and Baji Rao retreated in haste.

Next year the Nizam being invited by the emperor and several nobles repaired to the court and after a few months took up the field against the Marathas at the head of 34,000 men and a park of artillery. He was opposed by Baji Rao at Bhopal. The two were facing each other in this condition when the news of Nadir Shah's impending invasion induced the Nizam to accept the Peshwa's overtures of peace.

From 1750 onwards Sindhia and Holkar divided between themselves the revenues of the province, only a few Muslim chiefs, like the Nawab's of Bhopal continued to defy the Marathas.

One Raghuji Bhonsle organised and led predatory expeditions into the Carnatic. He captured Chanda Sahib and kept him in his custody for seven years, but could not obtain a permanent hold over the province. Then he made Nagpur the centre of his activities and extended his influence in Gondwana. Thus he came closer than any other Maratha leader to the Mughul provinces of Bengal.

The authority of the governor 'Ali Vardi Khan was questioned by his predecessor's brother-in-law, Rustam Jang, who sought the aid of Raguhji Bhonsle.

The first contest came in April, 1742, after his victory over Rustam Jang in Orissa, when he had sent the major part of his army to Murshidabad. While camping near Burdwan he suddenly found himself surrounded by a very large force of Maratha horsemen. Hopelessly outnumbered, he lost all his baggage and provisions but by sheer courage extricated himself from that perilous situation. When they marched on Murshidabad, burning and plundering as usual under the direction of Mir Habib, a supporter of Rustam Jang, the Nawab had to concentrate on his capital and for the moment reconciled himself to the loss of all west Bengal.

During the rainy season of 1742 Katwa was the centre of Maratha activities. In September when they were celebrating the Durga Puja the Nawab, having constructed a bridge of boats, one night crossed the Ganges with all speed and secrecy and surprised them in their camp. Being taken unawares a large number of them were killed and the rest fled away leaving tents, baggage and military stores. He pursued them but they offered no resistance except at Medinipur where they were again routed. A few months after this defeat at Medinipur two Maratha forces appeared creating a great deal of turmoil and terror. Both professed to be Shahu's troops. The one was commanded by his near relative and lieutenant, Raghuji Bhonsle, and the other by Balaji Rao, his chief Minister and Peshwa. The ostensible object of the first was to plunder in Bengal, while the second went there to defend the same province against the intruders and oppressors as allies of the viceroy. In consideration of twenty-two lakhs of rupees paid by the latter, the Peshwa promised to expel Raghuji from his dominions and to prevent him from making such raids in the future. Then Balaji pursued Raghuji and defeated him in an encounter, after which both left Bengal and Bihar (April, 1743).

Not even ten months had passed after this incident

when the forces of Raghuji, with whom the Peshwa had a secret compact appeared again under Bhasker Rao. 'Ali Vardi Khan, now being apprised of the true value of a Maratha promise, realized how he had been deceived by the Peshwa. Twenty Maratha *sardars* of note, including Bhaskar himself were invited to a friendly interview and done to death. The leaderless host was charged and dispersed with heavy slaughter. After this the Marathas repeated their annual invasions up to 1750 and were always defeated and repulsed with heavy losses. Mir Habib and Raghuji Bhonsle being at last tired made overtures of peace. The Nawab agreed. The treaty of 1751 provided that Mir Habib was to enter his service and receive from him appointment as the deputy governor of Orissa, from which the rich district of Medinipur, in view of its strategic frontier, was to be taken away and to be included in Bengal. Mir Habib was further authorised to pay the soldiers of Raghuji Bhonsle from the surplus revenue of Orissa, after meeting normal administrative expenses. Raghuji was to receive an yearly subsidy of twelve lakhs of rupees from the Nawab of Bengal on condition that no Maratha crossed his frontier.

Soon after the Maratha defeat at Panipat, Balaji Baji Rao died and his son, Madho Rao Ballal, succeeded him as Peshwa. He was only seventeen and his uncle Raghunath Rao acted as Regent. The young Peshwa insisted upon running the government himself. Raghunath secured the help of Hyderabad and marched upon Poona with Mughul troops under Nizam Ali and a large body of Marathas. At this Madho Rao presented himself before his uncle and relinquished all powers in his favour.

The Marathas were soon called upon to fight Haidar 'Ali of Mysore, who had pushed his frontiers nearly as far north as the Krishna.

A large Maratha army under Madho Rao himself marched against Haidar 'Ali. He was defeated and

restored all Maratha territories. He also undertook to pay thirty-two lakhs of rupees.

The reconciliation with Raghunath Rao had not been complete. To counter his further designs Madho Rao entered into a secret pact with Nizam 'Ali and their combined forces invaded Berar. Janoji Bhonsle sued for peace and restored three-fourths of the area which he had gained as the price of his double treachery (1766). Nearly two-thirds of the ceded territory worth fifteen lakhs of rupees annually were handed over to Nizam 'Ali by the Peshwa for his services rendered against Janoji, and for the promise of joint operations against Haider 'Ali next season.

Raghunath Rao, however, two years later, in 1768, collected a large Maratha force and raised the standard of rebellion. Damaji Gaekwar had sent troops and he expected Janoji Bhonsle to join him near Dhorup, where he had encamped. But Madho Rao was quick in his reaction. Before any reinforcements could come from Berar, Raghunath was a humiliated prisoner in his hands.

Of the four powers, the Marathas, Nizam 'Ali, Haider 'Ali and the English, every one was desirous of the annihilation of the remaining three, eliminating them one after the other by friendly combinations. Nizam 'Ali had already entered into an agreement with Madho Rao against Haider 'Ali. Now he concluded a treaty with the English to fight first against Haider 'Ali and then against the Marathas themselves.

But these moves could not escape the keen observation of Madho Rao Ballal. In January, 1767, without waiting for Nizam 'Ali to join him, he crossed the Krishna, took Sera, Oscotta and Mudgarhy, collected thirty lakhs of rupees from Haider Ali and nearly seventeen more from other places and returned home. He had secured the gains of war without sharing them with any one. He did not join Nizam 'Ali to annihilate Haider 'Ali; with English help he could have secured the partition of Haider 'Ali's territories and then he would

have combined with the English to fight against the Marathas.

However, Nizam 'Ali joined Haider 'Ali in war against the British and both the contending parties courted Madho Rao (1768). He began to negotiate an alliance with Nizam 'Ali and with Haider, to secure the assistance of the former to punish Janoji, to realize tribute from the latter and so to overawe the English so that they would not ally themselves with Janoji.

A combined Maratha and Hyderabad army under the Peshwa and Rukn-ud-Daulah marched towards Nagpur. The Peshwa advanced in the grand style of the Mughuls which had led them to ruin, while Janoji adopted the Maratha tactics of *Barggeri*, which had been the cause of their surprising success. Every plan of the Peshwa was foiled and the war was protracted. Both the parties at last were tired of the warfare and an agreement extremely favourable to the Peshwa was concluded on the 23rd March, 1769.

On the 3rd April, 1779, Haider had dictated peace to the English at the gates of Madras. Freed from his war with the English and strengthened by a promise of their support, he was not afraid of a Maratha invasion. He not only refused to pay the arrears of the indemnity to the Marathas, but he also levied contributions upon the polygars tributary to the Peshwa. Madho Rao could not tolerate such encroachments. In the ensuing fair season, therefore, he invaded Mysore at the head of twenty thousand horse and fifteen thousand infantry. The war went in favour of the Marathas until in October, 1771, there was a prospect of the total collapse of Mysore. Because of the serious illness of Madho Rao hostilities were ended in April 1772 and Haider 'Ali agreed to pay thirty six lakhs of rupees as arrears and expenses and fourteen lakhs as the annual tribute which he promised to remit with regularity in future.

When the Peshwa's power was firmly established in the south, Madho Rao desired to rebuild Maratha ascendancy in Hindustan. An army consisting of fifty thousand horse with a large body of infantry under Visaji Krishna with Ramchandra Ganesh, Tookaji Holkar and Mahadaji Sindhia crossed the Narbada in 1769. The best soldiers of the large army were Arabs and Abyssinians.

Shah 'Alam having lost hope of securing his throne through British help opened negotiations with the Marathas and was escorted by Mahadaji Sindhia from Allahabad to the camp of Visaji, under whose auspices he entered his capital.

Soon after, the Marathas marched out to wreak their vengeance upon Zabita Khan, and the rest of the Rohilla chieftains for 'the sons and brothers slain' on the battlefield of Panipat. They plundered Rohilkhand and burnt and destroyed what they could not carry. Before they returned home, in addition to various grants and cessions of territory, the Emperor was obliged to appoint the Peshwa as the *mirbakhshi* of the Mughul empire.

Madho Rao had revived the Maratha power in India before he died on the 18th November, 1772. A great military leader as he was, he seized every interval of peace to improve the civil government of his territories. His early death proved disastrous to the Maratha cause. His brother Narayan Rao, who succeeded him as the Peshwa, was soon murdered at the instigation of Raghunath Rao who now ascended the *masnad* of the Peshwa. He did not enjoy the fruits of his intrigue unmolested however.

Madho Rao Narain was born on the April 1, 1774, and when forty days old, he was formally installed as Peshwa. Nana Farnavis was the real power behind the throne.

Raghunath, having been deserted by Modaji Bhonsle and most of his own followers, had arrived in

Indore. Here he was received with great respect by Mahadaji Sindhia and Tookaji Holkar, and it was generally reported that these two chiefs would espouse his cause as well as the two brothers, Govind Rao and Fath Singh Gaekwar. Soon after he advanced with his army from Indore to the banks of the Tapti, but deserted by Sindhia and Holkar and pursued by the Poona forces, he had retired to Baroda.

Raghunath had already asked for help from the Bombay government. Now he repeated the request and after much haggling a treaty was signed on the March 6, 1775. All former treaties with the Bombay government were confirmed. Neither party was to assist the enemies of the other. The Bombay government agreed to help Raghunath with troops and artillery; and he undertook to pay the cost of these troops. In addition he promised to cede Salsette, Bassein and certain other territories. Before the British troops could arrive Raghunath was defeated by the Peshwa's army. He fled to Surat, came back with a British detachment, joined up with his defeated army and marched on Poona.

They were attacked by the enemy on the morning of the May 18, 1775 near Arsas. The Poona forces were defeated at last, mainly by the British detachment and again surprised and put to flight on the bank of the Narbada soon after. Farnavis was disheartened and Raghunath seemed to be on the verge of success when Warren Hastings, the governor-general and his council censured the Bombay government for having gone to war with the Marathas, declared the treaty with Raghoba impolitic, dangerous, unauthorized and unjust, ordered British forces to withdraw and opened direct negotiations with the Poona ministers, who now felt elated and submitted to a treaty only when the governor-general and council threatened to espouse Raghoba's cause and ordered military preparations.

The Treaty of Purandhar was signed on the March 1,

1776, between the Marathas and the English East India Company.

The treaty between the Bombay government and Raghoba was annulled. The English troops were to withdraw and Raghoba's army was to be disbanded. No assistance was to be given to Raghoba or to any other rebel against the Poona government. The cessions made by Fath Singh Gaekwar were to be restored to him, provided it could be proved that he had no authority to make such alienations without the consent of the Peshwa's government. Salsette might be retained by the English or exchanged with territory worth an annual revenue of three lakhs of rupees. All claims on the revenue of the city of Broach together with territory in its neighbourhood producing three lakhs of rupees were ceded. Twelve lakhs of rupees were paid towards the expenses incurred by the Bombay government. A general amnesty was proclaimed to all the followers of Raghoba, except a few implicated in the murder of Narayan Rao. If Raghoba accepted these terms and chose to reside at Kopergaon on the Godavari, the Poona government would afford him an establishment of one thousand horse and two hundred domestics and pay him twenty-five thousand rupees monthly for his other expenses.

The interval of peace after the treaty of Purandhar was of the greatest consequence to the ministers. It was utilized for the consolidation of their government.

The government of Bombay was mortified at the action of the government of Bengal. They provided asylum to Raghoba at Surat and then received him at Bombay and settled upon him an allowance of ten thousand rupees a month.

Meanwhile internal dissensions had created trouble within the Maratha government. Nana Farnavis despised the abilities of his cousin, Moraba Farnavis, once the chief minister of Madho Rao Ballal, and the latter

grew jealous of the growing power of Nana. Maraba was supported by all the partisans of Raghoba and had also won over Tukaji Holkar. They requested the Bombay government to bring Raghoba to Poona immediately.

The Bombay government agreed and began preparations. Their decision was approved by the governor-general and six battalions of sepoy with artillery and cavalry were ordered to march across India towards Bombay to help the Bombay government in the war against the Marathas and to counter French designs.¹ It was now clear that the party in power at Poona was decidedly hostile to the English and could become extremely dangerous to their interests in the event of any attack on the part of France against their possessions on the west coast of India. War between England and France having broken out in Europe, the British decided upon a plan of marching on Poona and installing Raghoba at the head of the government there as the regent of the young Peshwa. Four thousand men under Colonel Egerton embarked from Bombay in November 1778. Accompanied by Raghoba the whole force had ascended the Ghats by the December 23. On the July 9, 1779, the army reached Talegaon, nine miles from Poona. On the approach of the Maratha army the Bombay officers lost courage and tried to retreat. The Marathas pursued them and covered them at Wargaon where the position of the British was desperate. They opened negotiations with the Poona authorities Nana—and Sindhia and signed the humiliating Convention of Wargaon (1779).

The news of the disaster at Wargaon obliged the governor-general to make military preparations. Sir Eyre Coote, the commander-in-chief, proceeded towards the north-western frontier, the banks of the Jumna. General Goddard opened negotiations with

¹ A French envoy, St. Lubin, had come to Poona to discuss a Maratha French Alliance. Nana had encouraged him. This explains why the recommendations of the Bombay government were readily accepted.

the Poona government for a treaty on the basis of the Treaty of Purandhar with an additional article expressly excluding the French from any establishment within the Maratha dominions, but in vain. The English entered the war against the Marathas as principals.

General Goddard forced Fath Singh Gaekwar to transfer his allegiance from the Peshwa to the English. Goddard then seized Ahmadabad and followed this success by attacking the camp of Sindhia and Holkar whom he put to flight. Bassein was captured on the December 11, 1780. Gwalior had also surrendered in August to a detachment which the governor-general had sent under Captain Popham.

At this juncture the Supreme government ordered immediate cessation of hostilities. The Marathas, Haider 'Ali and Nizam 'Ali had combined in a general confederacy against the English, threatening their very existence in India. Nizam 'Ali was appeased. Peace with the Marathas had become essential to isolate Haider 'Ali. Proposals of peace were sent to Poona and Goddard was to advance at the head of an army to expedite the conclusion of peace. The Marathas were not intimidated. They advanced towards the Ghats and forced Goddard to retreat, after suffering heavy losses.

Meanwhile the English army, sent to create a diversion invaded under Lt. Col. Camace, Madhaji Sindhia's dominions in Malwa, Sindhia, marched eastward from Gujrat to oppose them. He achieved initial success but on the night of the March 24, Camace surprised his camp and routed his force.

In August Sindhia opened negotiations with Colonel Muir who had assumed, by this time, the command of the British army in Hindustan, and on the October 13, 1781 peace was concluded. Sindhia agreed to return to Ujjain and Muir to recross the Jumna. Sindhia was henceforth to remain neutral and use his good

offices in negotiating treaty.

On the May 17, 1782, the Treaty of Salbye, was signed. All territories conquered since the Treaty of Purandhar were restored to the Marathas. Raghunath Rao was to be allowed twenty-five thousand rupees a month and to be permitted to choose a place of residence.

Raghoba retired from the political scene and died soon after. Madho Rao Narain was established on the *masnad* without a rival. But Nana had to contend with Mahadaji Sindhia. Sindhia was, however, too much occupied for the present with his ambitious schemes in Hindustan; and Nana had to attend to the growing power of Tipu Sultan.

Nana was averse to an English alliance. He wished the English to be driven out of the country. He desired to join forces with Nizam 'Ali to humble the Sultan of Mysore. But the inefficient state of the Hyderabad armies had not escaped his observation. He was alarmed at the excellent discipline of the Mysore battalions and the strength of the Mysore forts and frontier garrisons. The report of a closer Franco-Mysore alliance decided his new policy. He began to work for an Anglo-Maratha alliance.

The formation of a coalition and the defeat of Tipu Sultan has been dealt with elsewhere. Tipu surrendered one-half of his dominion and one-third of the conquered territories fell to the Maratha share.

The death of Najaf Khan in 1782 was followed by quarrels among rival groups led by Afrasiyab Khan and Mirza Shafi'. Sindhia profited by this situation and ultimately succeeded in securing a complete hold over the Emperor and the court. He obtained for the Peshwa the office of *wakil-i-mutlaq* and for himself that of *naib-wakil-i-mutlaq*, secured the executive power in Hindustan and a rank in the court of the Peshwa, which was higher than that of all other ministers.

The Emperor conferred on him the command of his army and entrusted the provinces of Delhi and Agra to him. Sindhia undertook pay sixty-five thousand rupees monthly for the expenses of the Imperial household. The forts of Agra and Aligarh were surrendered. Imperial districts in the Doab were reduced. The authority of Sindhia was all supreme.

But his success was more brilliant than remunerative. It entailed additional expenditures and led to unjust measures. The *jagirs* of many of the Muslim nobles were sequestrated and the rest of them expected similar ruin. Soon he had to face a set-back. Under the sanction of the Emperor's name, Sindhia demanded tribute from the Rajput princes. From Jaipur alone he demanded 60 lakhs of rupees. The Rajputs rose in rebellion under the rajas of Jodhpur and Jaipur. Sindhia marched against them, but after some time had to fall back upon Gwalior, leaving Ghulam Qadir Rohilla master of the situation.

The Emperor was shocked at the failure of his friend and would not admit Ghulam Qadir into the citadel. But Ghulam Qadir forced an entry and occupied the palace and the citadel, taking all authority into his hands. His hold was short lived, however. He was defeated, captured alive and put to death by Sindhia. Shah 'Alam was resealed on the throne.

Sindhia's prestige in Hindustan was soon reestablished, but his influence at Poona had been greatly undermined by the British. He found it necessary to go to Poona. Publicly he gave out that he was proceeding to the Peshwa's court by order of the Emperor, bearing the *sanads* and insignia of the office of *wakil-i-mutlaq* for the Peshwa, which he had secured in heredity for him from the Emperor in unalienable *in'am* on the condition, however, of the Peshwa's appointing Sindhia and his posterity his perpetual deputies. This would also serve his end, because it would demonstrate his

influence on the Mughul Emperor, who was still looked upon with great respect.

"A grand suit of tents was pitched at a distance from Sindhia's camp outside Poona. The Peshwa proceeded towards them with the most pompous form. At the further end of these splendid apartments, a throne, meant to represent that the Great Mughul was erected, on which was displayed the Imperial *farman*, the *khil'at* or the robe of investiture, and all the principal insignia. The Peshwa, on approaching the throne, made his obeisance thrice, placed 101 gold *mohurs* upon it as a '*nazar*' and took his seat on its left. Sindhia's Persian secretary read the Imperial *farmans*, and, amongst others, the edict which prevented the slaughter of cows and bullocks. The Peshwa then received the *khil'at*, consisting of nine articles of dress, five superb ornaments of jewels, including a *kalghi*, a sword and shield, a pen case, a seal and ink-stand and two royal '*morchals*', accompanied by a *nalki*, a *palkee*, a horse and an elephant; besides six elephants bearing the Imperial standard, two crescents, two stars and the orders of the Fish and of the Sun, '*maht-i-maratib*'. The Peshwa retired to an adjoining tent and returned clothed in the imperial *khil'at*, when he resumed his seat; and Sindhia, followed by Nana Farnavis and such of the Peshwa's officers as were present, offered '*nazars*' of congratulations. When the Peshwa arose to return to his place, he was followed by Sindhia and Hari Pant Phurkay carrying the '*morchals*' and fanning him. He entered Poona seated in the *nalki*; the concourse of people assembled to witness the procession was exceedingly great; the pomp and grandeur displayed was beyond anything that the inhabitants of Poona had ever seen, whilst the clang of thousands of musical instruments the shouts of the populace, volleys of musketry, and salvoes of cannon seemed to give all the effect that the projector of this

state ceremony could possibly desire." The investiture of Sindhia by the Peshwa as *na'ib-wakil-i-mutlaq* immediately followed on their arrival at the Peshwa's palace.

To establish his authority in the court, it was essential for Sindhia to gain the confidence of the young Peshwa. The frank manner of Sindhia who talked to the young prince of hunting and hawking and took him out on frequent excursions to see those field sports, made him soon his constant companion. Nana could easily see the designs of Sindhia and watched him vigilantly. Sindhia would probably have ultimately triumphed over his rival, but in the midst of his ambitious schemes he was stricken suddenly with a violent fever and died on the February 12, 1794.

Sindhia's death left Nana without a rival. Soon after he picked a quarrel with the Nizam and defeated him at Kardla. The Nizam had to make humiliating cessions of territory. This triumph greatly added to Nana's prestige and he may not be said to have reached the climax of his power. But not long after this victory he had to face a crisis at home. Madho Rao Narain was now in his twenty-first year, and wanted to exercise the powers of his office, but Nana would not relax the rigid tutelage under which he was being kept. The Peshwa and his cousin Baji Rao had carried on correspondence for some time and this came to Nana's knowledge. He burst into a rage and reproached his sovereign. The helpless sovereign committed suicide (October 25, 1795). The very pillar on which Nana's power rested gave way. Madho Rao avenged his wrongs in death more than he could ever do in life.

The heir to the *masnad* was Baji Rao and Nana was afraid of his ascension to power. Daulat Rao Sindhia who had succeeded Mahadaji continued his father's policy of establishing his influence at Poona. A period of struggle ensued in which Nana showed great capacity

for intrigue. Ultimately however Baji Rao succeeded in gaining the throne. Farnavis was imprisoned by Sindhia with the Peshwa's approval. Baji Rao now wanted to weaken Sindhia who released Nana Farnavis to annoy the Peshwa. Nana, however was now an old man and his death was near. He died on the March 13, 1800. It has been stated that all the wisdom of the Maratha government departed with him. His ambition to possess supreme power was not always restricted by principles. But he was an able politician and a resourceful strategist.

Baji Rao wanted to rule as well as reign. But the virtual imprisonment in which he had so far lived had restricted the development of his personality. With the gaoled prince the destruction of his gaolers and their supporters had long been a cherished desire. It would not allow him to think of the injury to Maratha interests or his policy. He himself shattered the very forces which were to support his independence. As a prisoner he had had no probation in administration and no training as a soldier; to gain the favours of his keeper, he needed a sweet tongue which he cultivated. His lovely face and graceful youth and tragic past made him a dangerous seducer. Baji Rao's main instrument was intrigue. In his efforts to maintain his independence, he succeeded only in the subjugation of the whole Maratha nation to a foreign power.

If Baji Rao failed to see the unfortunate consequences of destroying national solidarity; other Maratha figures like Jaswant Rao Holkar and Daulat Rao Sindhia were equally short-sighted. All the three combined together to invite common disaster.

In 1799 Jaswant Rao devastated Sindhia's territory in Malwa, which obliged him to repair to the north.

Holkar was an opponent of Baji Rao and after suffering defeat in the north decided to carry war into the Deccan. He assailed Sindhia's possessions in Khandesh. One of his officers, Shah Ahmad Khan, entered

the Peshwa's territory; Narsing Rao came out to oppose him and his forces were annihilated. Then Holkar marched on the Peshwa's capital and won a decisive victory. The Peshwa fled from Poona to Bassein and did what was most dreaded : he accepted British tutelage by signing the ill-fated Treaty of Bassein (December 31, 1803). Baji Rao had scarcely ratified the treaty, when he realised his error. He wrote to Sindhia and Raghuj Bhonsle to excuse his conduct. Holkar asked them both to march to Poona with all speed.

Holkar had meanwhile installed Vinaik Rao, son of Amrat Rao, the adopted son of Raghunath. Since British forces, however, escorted the Peshwa to Poona he was installed there again on 13th May, 1803.

The British having brought the Peshwa under their control now wanted to subjugate his powerful lieutenants, Daulat Rao Sindhia and Raghuj Bhonsle who were equally determined to rescue the Peshwa from British control. They were required to confirm the Treaty of Bassein and accept subsidiary alliances. Negotiations continued. Sindhia's forces crossed the Narbada. Bhonsle's armies also advanced. They offered every concession to Holkar to induce him to join the confederacy and fight the national foe, but they did not succeed. Gaekwar accepted a subsidiary alliance. Sindhia and Bhonsle were in constant correspondence with the Peshwa. He encouraged them, but his armies could not join them at this stage.

They were thus left alone to oppose the British who made war preparations on a grand scale. Wellesley was determined to finish them because they were no more needed as a counterpoise against the tiger of Mysore. The Peshwa and Gaekwar had already been bridled. Nizam 'Ali was on his death bed after having reduced Hyderabad to insignificance in contemporary politics. He died on the day the hostilities broke out.

The British on the other hand mobilised all their resources, and could bring fifty thousand men to the battle-field. Nevertheless Sindhia and Bhonsle refused to be terrified. The British agent left their camp on August 3, 1803) and they were attacked in every quarter in the Deccan and in Hindustan. The main Maratha army under Sindhia and Bhonsle was defeated, (September 23, 1803) near the village of Assaye. Sindhia lost Burhanpur, Asirgarh and Khandesh in central India and Broach, Champanir, and Pawangarh in Gujrat.

The British captured the Imperial cities of Agra and Delhi and Sindhia's entire possessions along the Chambal.

In Bhonsle's dominions Manikpatam, Cuttack, Ballasore, Sorung and Bundelkhand were occupied. The confederate armies of Sindhia and Bhonsle were defeated by General Wellesley near the village of Argaon in 1803 and Gawilgarh was invaded and captured. Sindhia and Bhonsle were completely demoralized. They accepted the British terms in the treaties of Deogaon (December 17, 1803) and Surji Arjangaon (December 30).

Sindhia ceded to the British large territories which included the Doab, Ahmadnagar, Broach, and the areas between Ajanta Ghat and Godavari. Bhonsle lost Cuttack and the area of west Wardha. Both of them renounced all claims on the Nizam and the Peshwa and undertook not to employ any European belonging to a nation at war with the British.

The power of Sindhia and Bhonsle thus broken, there remained only Holkar to cope with. In spite of Sindhia's persuasions to join the confederacy Holkar had decided to stand aloof. He had failed to make a true appraisal of the situation and did not realize how necessary it was for the Marathas to combine their resources against the foreigner.

Holkar believed in the predatory system of warfare,

and his plan was to keep his infantry and guns in reserve under the protection of forts, avoid an action, devastate the Company's provinces and attack the British lines of supplies. The rapid victories of the English, however, startled him and he moved up towards the Jaipur territory to secure aid from the Rajput states, the Raja of Bharatpur and the Sikhs, and invited Sindhia to cooperate with him, to break the treaty and renew the war.

He adopted a menacing attitude and made extravagant demands upon the British government. The governor-general ordered Lake and Wellesley to attack his troops and possessions in every direction (April, 1804).

Amir Khan surprised the British troops in Bundelkhand and two companies of sepoys were annihilated. Lt. Col. Monson, intending to cooperate with Col. Murray from Gujrat, entered Holkar's territory by the Mukandra pass. He continued his march towards the Chambal until he heard that Holkar was crossing the river to attack him with the whole of his army and decided to retreat. Holkar followed at his heels from place to place attacking him again and again. Only a miserable wreck of the British troops escaped to Agra.

Holkar besieged the Mughul capital, but it was gallantly defended by Ochterlony. Lake marched to the latter's relief. Holkar succeeded in keeping his infantry out of reach and they were already five days on their march towards the territory of his ally, the Raja of Bharatpur at the time of Lake's arrival.

Holkar began to ravage the Company's territories. His route lay through the Doab. General Lake marched in pursuit and inflicted a severe defeat on his cavalry at Farrukhabad. Holkar fled towards Dig, which was besieged and captured by Lake (December 13, 1804). The loss of Dig was a great blow to Holkar. By this time his territories in the Deccan had also been reduced; his

principal forts in Malwa and his capital, Indore, were already in English hands. His last asylum was Bharatpur. Lake failed to capture Bharatpur, in spite of several efforts. The fort was defended bravely by the Raja and Holkar harassed Lake's troops from outside. At last the Raja of Bharatpur desired a reconciliation and the English accepted his terms on April 10, 1805.

The British authorities had made peace with the Raja of Bharatpur all the more readily because they were, by this time, greatly alarmed at the attitude of Sindhia. He had been raising strong objections to the articles of the Treaty of Surji Arjangaon regarding the terms granted to the Rana of Gohud. In fact when Holkar was fighting around Delhi, Sindhia had marched northwards, professing to proceed towards his own capital of Ujjain, but really to join hands with him against the British. He moved on gradually until, when he approached the Chambal, the British Resident remonstrated strongly. Sindhia retreated a few miles, but he sent on a part of his cavalry and all his Pindaris towards Bharatpur. The peace treaty with Bharatpur was, however, concluded before their arrival.

A few days later, Holkar and Amir Khan repaired to Sindhia's camp and met with a cordial reception. Lord Lake marched with his whole army from Bharatpur towards their camp. They retreated to Kotah and from there to Ajmer. They were making their plans and Lake was awaiting the end of the monsoon to strike at them. But the British government changed and with it the political situation changed.

The protracted warfare, the resultant embarrassments and a sudden accumulation of debts led to a clamour in England against Wellesley's administration. He was recalled and Cornwallis assumed charge of the government (July 30, 1805). He was to reverse the annexationist policy of his predecessor. He desired to put an end to war with Holkar and to compose differences with

Sindhia at once. He disapproved of the treaties of defence and guarantee entered into with the petty rajas of Jodhpur, Jaipur, Bharatpur, Macherri and Bundi. War was ended and engagements were made in the spirit of the new policy.

The fortress of Gwalior and the Gohud territory were restored to Sindhia. The river Chambal from Kotah on the west to the extremity of the Gohud territory on the east was declared the boundary between the two States. But the two districts of Bhadek and Soseporara on the right bank of the Jumna and south of the Chambal, considered necessary to the greater security of the Company's frontier, were taken over by the British government. In other respects the Treaty of Surji Arjangaon remained in force.

A treaty was signed with Holkar on the December 24, 1805. All his territories were restored to him. Holkar renounced all claims on the British government and its allies. He engaged not to have any European in his service.

The Treaty of Deogaon concluded with Raghuji Bhonsle continued in force, only Patwa and Sambalpur were restored to him (August 1806).

A treaty with the Gaekwar had already been concluded on April 21, 1805 increasing the subsidiary force from 2000 men to 3000 infantry with a company of artillery to be stationed within his territory. The Gaekwar ceded territory to meet the increased cost. Treaties of alliance with the petty rajas signed when their support was of importance for the warring armies were now renounced by the British government and the rajas who had rendered valuable services to the Company in its hour of need were now left at the mercy of their previous masters, Sindhia and Holkar, whom they had betrayed and wronged.

The Peshwa was not reconciled to British control.

After having subdued his *jagirdars*, establishing his position and filling his treasury, Baji Rao raised in 1813 a brigade of regular infantry under European officers, paid, like the British sepoys, direct by the State.

The Peshwa sent his agents, to the courts of Sindhia, Bhonsle and Holkar¹ and a secret treaty forming a confederacy was concluded. He sent an agent, Ganesh Pant, to reside with the Pindaris and had a secret interview at Kopergaon with some of their chiefs.

At Baroda Sitaram Raoji was the chief minister. With him were associated in administration, Fath Singh, the brother of the Gaekwar and his heir apparent, and Fath Singh's secretary, Gangadhar Shastri. Supported by Lt. Col. Walkar, the British, resident who had complete control over the Baroda government, the Shastri soon became chief minister in all but name. He was sent to Poona under a British guarantee of his safety to settle outstanding matters with the Peshwa. The Shastri was pro-British and was likely to hamper the execution of the secret designs of the Maratha confederates, who wanted to win over the Gaekwar's government. Trimbakji therefore decided to remove him. He was assassinated at Pandarpur on the occasion of a pilgrimage on the July 14, 1815.

The British government was outraged. Baji Rao and Trimbakji denied all knowledge. The British resident was enraged. He instituted an enquiry. Trimbakji's guilt was established and the Peshwa was required to deliver him up to the British government. He evaded the demand. For a time Baji Rao seemed resolved to stand or fall with his minister. But when the British troops were assembled at Poona, he delivered up Trimbakji (September 25, 1815). Trimbakji was confined by the British government in the fort of Thana in Salsette but he escaped.

¹ Jaswant Rao had died in 1811 and had been succeeded by his minor son Malhar Rao with his favourite mistress, Tulsi Bai, as Regent under the control of Amir Khan.

Baji Rao now intensified his negotiations with Sindhia, Holkar, Bhonsle, Amir Khan and the Pindaris against the British government; he made great additions to his army and supplied Trimbakji with large sums of money directing him to raise troops at different places, which, if discovered by the British government, might appear to be plundering Pindaris or insurgents.

The British resident at Poona, Elphinstone, who had early and exact information of Trimbakji's secret proceedings objected. The Peshwa's government replied that no troops were being raised. All knowledge of Trimbakji's activities was also denied. Elphinstone, with the consent of the governor-general, called in the subsidiary force and ordered it to act against the troops assembling at Nattaputa within 50 miles of Poona and on the frontiers of the Nizam's territory. The Peshwa's levies of cavalry as well as infantry and the repairs of his forts, which had been going on for some time, proceeded with great speed and, as the rainy season approached, it was feared that the Peshwa's might betake himself to a hill fort, inaccessible at that season, and commence a war which must be protracted and would encourage all the Maratha powers to unite in his cause. The resident, therefore, decided, to force the issue without delay. He was asked to accept a subsidiary force within one month and to deliver three principal forts, Singadh, Purandhar and Raigadh, as a pledge for the acceptance of the demand. The Peshwa temporized. He hoped to gain time until the season was well advanced and he could call into operation, with full effect, the extensive confederacy he had planned. But at one o'clock in the morning on the May 8, 1817, just after the stipulated one month was over British troops surrounded the city of Poona. Baji Rao submitted. The forts were surrounded and the arrest of Trimbakji was proclaimed. The British were determined to push matters further. Baji Rao was presented with

the draft of a new treaty, which he signed under compulsion.

The Treaty of Poona compelled Baji Rao to admit the guilt of Trimbakji Dinglia as the murderer of Gangadhar Shastri and his obligation to seize and deliver him up to the British government. He was forced to renounce his position as the head of the Maratha confederacy and all his rights beyond the boundary of his own dominions between the Tungbhadra and Narbada. He was to have no communication with any foreign power. Neither he was to send nor to receive *wakils*. The fort of Ahmadnagar, together with all his rights north of the Narbada, was surrendered. Instead of furnishing the contingent of 5000 horse and 3000 infantry required by the Treaty of Bassein, for the defence of his own territory or that of his ally, he was now compelled to allow the Company to raise these troops. For their maintenance he was forced to cede extensive territories in the Carnatic, Konkon and Gujrat. He was compelled to relinquish all claims on the Gaekwar in future. The treaty was so designed as to render Baji Rao incapable of further action.

The Marathas were in secret alliance with the Pindaris, a host of free-booters who devastated peaceful village and lived upon loot. They had increased by this time to about 50,000 men. The Pathans among them had infantry and guns and in this respect no native army in India was more efficient. Their artillery was excellent. Their infantry was estimated at about 10000, and the cavalry at 15,000 men. The Pindaris, Holkarshahi as well as Sindhiashahi, comprising the three *durras* of Karim Khan, Chitu and Wasil Muhammad numbered about 25,000 men. Of every 1000 Pandaris about 400 were tolerably well-mounted and armed; every fifteenth man carried a matchlock. Their favourite weapon was the Maratha spear from 12 to 18 feet long. For several years the territory of the

Marathas had been in general respected and their ravages were directed principally against the Nizam and the British government. Hastings aimed at their complete eradication from central India. At the same time he was not unaware of Baji Rao's confederal plans. Moreover, he believed like Wellesley, in establishing complete British ascendancy in India.

Raghuji Bhonsle died on the March 22, 1816 and was succeeded by his son Parsaji under the regency of the latter's cousin, Appa Sahib. To secure his position, Appa Sahib entered into a subsidiary alliance with the British. It was followed by the Treaty of Poona with the Peshwa and the Treaty of Baroda by which the Gaekwar accepted an addition to his subsidiary force and an additional cession of his territory to the British government. They were expected to help in the suppression of Pindaris. Besides these the governor-general's plan comprised of treaties of a similar nature with Sindhia, Holkar, the Rajputs, the Nawab of Bhopal and the chiefs of Bundelkhand. To support his negotiations with them and then to encircle and annihilate the Pindaris and their abettors at all points, British forces, upwards of 91000 were mobilized from the Deccan, Gujrat and Bengal. Their movements in the north of Bundelkhand were carried out with secrecy so as not to give alarm to Sindhia until he should find himself compelled to submit to the intended propositions. The main body assembled at Sikandra under the personal command of Hastings, crossed the Jamna and occupied a position south of Gwalior while the division from Agra under Major General Donkin, took up a position immediately to the north. This manoeuvre placed Sindhia's camp and his best artillery at the mercy of British troops. A new treaty was now placed before him. It was signed on the November 5, 1817.

The aim of the British government was declared to be an effectual extinction of all predatory hordes. For

this purpose, by this treaty, Sindhia's suzerainty over the Rajput states was dissolved, although the payment of the tribute due to him was guaranteed, and he was compelled to place his troops at the disposal of the British government with a British officer superintending each of the principal divisions. As a security for the fulfilment of these terms, the forts of Hindia and Asirgarh were demanded.

Meanwhile the agents of the British government were actively engaged in negotiating treaties with other states. The most important of them was an agreement reached between the British resident at Delhi and Amir Khan's agent there on the November 9, 1817. It broke the backbone of Holkar's forces. Amir Khan was guaranteed a state and taken under British protection on the condition of disbanding his followers and relinquishing all connection with free-booters.

Malcolm, the political agent of the governor-general with the army of the Deccan, had recommended to Baji Rao to recruit an army for the purpose of aiding in the Pindari war. He did this with great enthusiasm and showed remarkable activity; his forts were garrisoned, stored and repaired; and orders were issued to prepare his fleet.

Soon after the Dussehra, on October 19, 1817, parties of troops were coming into Poona from all quarters by day and by night until 33,000 men were assembled. This force began hostilities with the British. An indecisive action was fought at Kirkee where Elphinstone had withdrawn his force. General Smith arrived with reinforcements; he captured Poona and marched in pursuit of the Peshwa. Another indecisive action was fought at Koregaon which was followed by the capture of Sitara.

General Smith surprised the Marathas at Ashti, February 19, 1818, Gokal, the Maratha commander, was killed in this battle.

The Marathas had resolved to give battle as soon as

Holkar's force under Ramdin should join them. For this purpose the Peshwa's infantry and guns, left at Napani had arrived at Kurar. But the unexpected attack of General Smith and the death of Gokal completely disconcerted their plans. The Peshwa remained for a time at Kopergaon and then moved towards Chandore intending to proceed to Nagpur where Appa Sahib had risen against the British in concert with him.

Appa Sahib in the beginning of 1817 caused Pursaji to be secretly strangled and succeeded him as Modaji Bhonsle. He was won over to the Peshwa's side. As soon as Baji Rao had attacked the British troops at Poona he began to augment his military establishment. On November 25 his troops took up positions near the residency. The British troops occupied Sitabaldi hill, lying in the west of Nagpur, separating it from the residency. The Marathas attacked to dislodge them, but failed. The British troops then charged and dispersed them. Appa Sahib sent his *wakils* to express his sorrow and disavow the attack. The British resident at Nagpur, however, demanded the absolute submission of Appa Sahib, requiring him to disband his troops, to place his territory at the disposal of the British government and to surrender himself as a hostage. A respite of three days was requested; three hours were granted. When the time expired, the troops advanced. Modaji Bhonsle surrendered himself on December 16.

He was reinstated. But his government was effectively controlled. According to a new treaty the Sitabaldi Hill was taken and fortified by the British to secure the subordination of the capital and the British troops were in complete military occupation of the whole country. To defray the full charge of these armies of occupation Modaji had to cede territories with a revenue of about 24 lakhs of rupees. He soon renewed his efforts to oppose the British and applied to Baji Rao for assistance. The resident discovered his intrigues

The Marathas

however and arrested him (March 15, 1818). A minor, the grand son of the late Raghuji Bhonsle, was placed on the *masnad* and the resident took charge of the entire administration himself.

When terms were offered to Amir Khan, negotiations were also opened with Holkar's court. In November, 1817 a secret communication was received from Tulsi Bai, offering to place the young Malhar Rao and herself under the protection of the British government. But the soldiery was enthusiastic about the Peshwa's cause. They moved towards the Deccan and encamped at Mahidpur. They were offered terms. Ghafur Khan, the Pathan commander, kept up a show of negotiations in the name of Malhar Rao Holkar, but they were so averse to an arrangement that they put Tulsi Bai to death and confined Ganpat Rao, her diwan and paramour. They were attacked by Sir Thomas Hislop and Sir John Malcolm. They dispersed only after a gallant fight. Holkar submitted and a new treaty was concluded (January 6, 1818).

By this treaty Holkar was required to transfer his tribute from the Rajputs to the British government. He ceded his territory north of the Bundi hills and south of the Satpura mountains to the Company and several districts to the Rana of Kotah. He agreed to commit no hostile act, to have no communication with other states, and to entertain in his service no European without the sanction of the British government. He confirmed the agreement with Amir Khan. To protect his territories, the British government bound itself to maintain a field force at his cost, of course.

Meanwhile the pursuit of the Pindaris had also been proceeding. During the rains of 1817, the Pindaris occupied positions between Indore and Sagar. Karim Khan was particularly active in recruiting his *durra*, but the enmity between him and Chitu made cooperation impossible even in self-defence. Three British

forces marched on them from different directions. The *durras* of Karim Khan and Wasil Muhammad took the route of Gwalior. Chitu, with his *durra*, went to the north-west in the hope of getting support from Holkar. Karim Khan and Wasil Muhammad were cut off from Gwalior. They forced the Lodwana Ghat and intended to cross the Chambal. Being intercepted again, they moved at the head of 4000 of the best mounted of their followers westward into Mewar. Those who were left behind turned southward, and after traversing the whole Deccan, entered the Company's territories in the Carnatic. Here they were attacked and annihilated. Sir Thomas Hislop and Col. Adams pursued Karim Khan and Wasil Muhammad. After many adventures Karim Khan surrendered himself to Sir John Malcolm on February 15, 1818. Wasil Muhammad took refuge in Sindhia's camp in Gwalior. He was kept at Ghazipur under guard, and at last, being intercepted in an attempt to escape, he destroyed himself by poison.

Chitu's *durra* had so far eluded capture. But on January 26, 1818, they were surprised and dispersed in the Deccan, and the Bhils and Grassias in the neighbourhood attacked the fugitives and spared none who fell into their hands. Chitu escaped with only 200 followers. He went through a variety of adventures. At length left alone and in flight through a jungle in the neighbourhood of Asirgarh he was attacked by a tiger and killed. His skill and intelligence and his spirit and perseverance were worthy of a better cause.

Baji Rao had been moving from place to place followed by British troops until a detachment under Col. Scott overtook him. Hemmed in from every side and having lost hope of escape, he sent his agent, Anand Rao Chundwarkar, to Sir John Malcolm. He made only three requests. His pension should not be

less than 8 lakhs of rupees ; those who had followed him faithfully so far should not suffer for their loyalty ; the Brahmins and the religious establishments supported by his family should continue to receive their grants. On the June 3, 1818 Baji Rao surrendered himself.

With his surrender all hopes of the revival of a Maratha ascendancy in India disappeared. Other Maratha chiefs, Sindhia, Holkar, Bhonsle and Gaekwar had already been made incapable of asserting their independence. Maratha power rose against the Mughuls and contributed to their downfall; but they succumbed to Mughul culture and Mughul traditions. Mughul fashions, ceremonial, dress and titles were adopted by them. The Peshwa would march with his armies in the grand style of the Mughuls to fight in the open. The Peshwa valued the office of *mir bakhshi* or the *wakil-i-mutlaq* in a phantom Mughul empire. They came very near the achievement of their ideal of *Hindupad padshahi*, they did not succeed because they lacked constructive ability.

CHAPTER VII

THE NAWAB-WAZIRS OF OUDH

The founder of the Oudh dynasty, Mir Muhammad Amin, originally came from Nishapur (Iran). For about two years he remained in the service of Sarbuland Khan, *faujdar* of Kara-Manikpur. He left the Khan's service in the first quarter of 1713.

He came to Delhi after the accession of Farrukh Siyar to the throne and attached himself to Muhammad Ja'far, known as Taqarrub Khan Wala-Shahi, who helped him in obtaining the post of *naibkarori*. Later he became *faujdar* of Hindaun-Biyanah in Agra province in October 1719.

He showed his military skill and administrative aptitude by subjugating the fiery Rajputs and turbulent Jats alike. In his charge of Hindaun-Biyanah, he reduced the unruly *zamindars* to submission and restored order within the short period of six months. His subjugation of the district enhanced his reputation as an efficient soldier and he received a *mansab* of 1500.

The old rivalry between the Sayyid brothers, Husain 'Ali Khan and 'Abdullah Khan, and Nizam-ul-Mulk had led the latter to retire to the Deccan where he defeated and killed Husain 'Ali Khan's *bakhshi* and nephew in June and August 1720 respectively. This led Husain 'Ali Khan to march against Nizam-ul-Mulk, so he left Agra with the Emperor Muhammad Shah on 11 September, 1720.

In the meantime Muhammad Amin Khan I'timad-ud-Daulah, uncle of Nizam-ul-Mulk, organised a plot which led to the murder of Husain 'Ali Khan on 8 October, 1720. Muhammad Shah was proclaimed Emperor and the conspirators were suitably rewarded in

a *darbar* on 9 October, 1720. Mir Muhammad Amin became *Sa'adat Khan Bahadur* with the rank of 5,000 *zat* and 3,000 *sawar*.

Later, on 15 October, 1720 Sa'adat Khan was appointed governor of Akbarabad (Agra) and promoted to the rank of 6,000 *zat* and 5,000 *sawar*.

Sa'adat Khan further distinguished himself against 'Abdullah Khan and the Emperor honoured him on 20 November, 1720, with the title of *Bahadur Jang* and bestowed on him the highest insignia of honour, the *mahi maratib*. In September 1722 he was appointed to the *subahdari* of Oudh including the *faujdari* of Gorakhpur. He attacked and overpowered the turbulent *shaikhzadas* of Lucknow. His success enhanced his reputation, but he had to crush the most turbulent chief of the time, Mohan Singh of Tiloi, who fell fighting on the field. A fresh revenue settlement was carried out which increased the revenue of the province and the Emperor, pleased with his work, bestowed on him the title of *Burhan-ul-Mulk*.

After subduing Oudh proper Sa'adat Khan new turned his attention to the subjugation of the four *sarkars* of Banaras, Jaunpur, Ghazipur and Chunargarh corresponding to the modern districts of Banaras and Jaunpur, which were taken in lease by him from a Delhi noble. By the end of 1735 Sa'adat Khan was appointed to the government of Kora-Jahanabad where Bhagwant Singh had kept the whole district in a state of turmoil. Sa'adat Khan attacked him, and he was killed in the fight. This resounding success helped to restore order in the dominion of the Nawab who left for Delhi and waited on the Emperor in November 1735.

In March 1737 the Marathas entered the Doab and advanced on Jalesar. Sa'adat Khan, on his way to court had started from Fyzabad with a big army. He turned towards Jalesar. The two forces clashed on 23 March, 1737. The Marathas could not withstand

Sa'adat Khan's fierce onslaught. They broke and fled, hotly pursued by Sa'adat Khan. The whole of the Doab was cleared of the Marathas, and Sa'adat Khan joined Khan Dauran (Samsam-ud-Daulah) and Muhammad Khan Bangash near Muttra on 22 April, 1737. But Baji Rao's attack on Delhi and the imbecile policy followed by the court disgusted him so much that he retired to Oudh.

On 21 January, 1739, Nadir Shah captured Lahore and advanced on Delhi. Sa'adat Khan in response to imperial orders, started from Oudh with "a well-equipped army of 30,000 horse, a good park of artillery and vast stores of materials of war." He covered the long and arduous journey of 450 miles in the incredibly short period of one month and reached Karnal on 22 February 1739. His baggage train being attacked by the Persians Sa'adat Khan impetuously engaged them, but was overwhelmed.

After the massacre of Delhi Sa'adat Khan died so suddenly on 19 March, 1739, that it has given rise to many speculations. Some think that he died of an old wound which he had neglected, others are of the opinion that he committed suicide being unable to bear the insults of Nadir Shah because he could not pay his share of the indemnity.

Sa'adat Khan was a man of simple taste both in food and dress. He was kind to his friends and considerate to his dependants; with his equals he was free and frank. Even his enemies have acknowledged his personal valour and reckless courage. He was solicitous of the welfare of his soldiers. Besides paying them regularly, he was generous with his gifts and loans to such an extent that his soldiers, at the time of his death, owed him more than two crores of rupees.

He was a good and efficient administrator and he succeeded in subjugating the turbulent *zamindars* of Oudh. The smaller landholders and the tenants found in him a

benevolent protector who shielded them from the oppression and chronic tyranny of the bigger landholders. He endeared himself to the people through his wise and liberal administration.

Mirza Muhammad Muqim, better known to history as Abu-l Mansur Khan Safdar Jang, was the son of the sister of Sa'adat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk. He was born at Nishapur about 1708 and was fifteen years of age when in response to his uncle's summons he came to India in 1723. He married Sa'adat Khan's eldest daughter, Sadr-un-Nisa Begum, and was appointed his deputy in Oudh. The Emperor Muhammad Shah honoured him with the title of Abu-l Mansur Khan.

During his deputy-governorship of Oudh (1724-1739) Abu-l Mansur Khan not only learnt the intricacies of administration but also acquired much experience on the field of battle when he followed his uncle in punitive campaigns against the refractory landholders of the *subah*. He showed commendable military skill in March 1739 when he tempted Malhar Rao Holkar into drawing near the main army of Sa'adat Khan in the Battle of Jalesar.

On the death of Sa'adat Khan on March 19, 1739, Abu-l Mansur Khan succeeded him. The title of *Safdar Jang* was bestowed on him by the Emperor, and he was confirmed in the *jagirs* held by his uncle Sa'adat Khan.

The death of Burhan-ul-Mulk was a signal for the turbulent chiefs to rise against the new *subahdar*. The *shaikhs* of Amethi-Bandagi Mian, 14 miles to the south west of the Lucknow, the Rajput chiefs of Hasanpur, Tiloi and Garh Amethi in the Sultanpur district and the Pathans of Jagdishpur, eleven miles to the north-east of Tiloi, combined together to throw off the yoke. Safdar Jang marched out against the rebels and defeated and dispersed them.

He met with the greatest resistance from the raja of Tiloi whose fort was protected by an extensive and thick

belt of bamboos and thorny jungle. Safdar Jang reached Tiloi on November 10, 1739, and overcame the stubborn resistance of the Rajputs. Some time later he had to march against Raja Nawal Singh of Nabinagar and Katersar in the modern Sitapur district, who had refused to pay the government revenue. Safdar Jang left Fyzabad and reached Habibnagar about 8 March, 1741. The forts were besieged and, in spite of heroic resistance by the Rajputs, reduced. Nawal Singh submitted to the victor who was considerate and restored the territory to the raja.

In October 1748, in response to a summons from the Emperor, Safdar Jang left Fyzabad and proceeded towards the imperial city which he entered on 27 November, 1743. Shortly after he was appointed *mir-i-atish* (superintendent of the imperial artillery). On 4 October, 1744, Safdar Jang was appointed governor of Kashmir which he administered through his cousin, Sher Jang.

Safdar Jang's relations with the Rohillas were not happy. He therefore decided to curb their power. This was the beginning of the long internecine warfare between these two Muslim powers which ended with the destruction of the Rohillas as a force in 1774. In 1745 Safdar Jang found a convenient pretext to urge the Emperor Muhammad Shah to invade Rohilkhand. The Emperor alarmed at 'Ali Muhammad Khan's pretensions to independence, readily acceded. The Rohilla stronghold Bangarh was demolished and 'Ali Muhammad Khan's dominions confiscated.

During the first invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali, in 1748, Safdar Jang rendered meritorious service. The Emperor was highly pleased with his exertions and valiant fighting at Manupur on 21 March, 1748 after the death of Qamar-ud-din Khan, which led to Abdali's defeat and flight.

When Muhammad Shah died on 25 April, 1748,

Ahmad Shah ascended the throne. He appointed Safdar Jang as his *wazir*.

There is ample evidence to prove that Safdar Jang entered upon his high office with the lofty ambitions of saving the Mughul Empire from final dissolution. He even had a scheme to extend the shrunken Empire up to its old frontiers in the north and north-west and up to the Narbada river in the south.

He visualised a great danger in the new kingdom of Ahmad Shah Abdali and urged upon the Emperor the necessity of recovering Afghanistan. He also looked upon the Afghan colonies, within the Empire, as outposts of the traditional enemies of the Mughuls.

He wanted to re-conquer the Panjab and uproot the Jats. But all his plans were thwarted by the machinations of his enemies at the royal court. Jawid Khan in collusion with the notorious Udham Bai, the Queen Mother, gradually usurped all powers and the *wazir* was reduced to a mere nullity.

Matters came to a head in the first half of 1752. Abdali invaded India for the third time and reached Lahore. Safdar Jang, in compliance with a note in the Emperor's own hand, started with the Marathas in April 1752 to oppose Abdali. But his enemies forestalled him again. Before Safdar Jang could reach the capital the Emperor, under the influence of his advisers formally ceded the provinces of the Panjab and Multan on 23 April to the Afghan invader; Safdar Jang was opposed to this policy.

This seems to be the turning point in Safdar Jang's attitude. He was disillusioned in the extreme. He felt that he could not save the tottering Empire from being overwhelmed by the rising Afghan kingdom in the north-west, a fate which he considered imminent. He tried to oppose the Afghans with the Marathas, play the Rajputs against the Deccanis and root out the Jats.

This policy was, however, not acceptable to his opponents, who considered it dangerous to solicit Hindu help against the Afghans; nor did they look upon the Afghans settled in the subcontinent with such suspicion. Their differences ultimately resulted in a long drawn out civil war in which the *wazir* fought the court. Lack of unity among his opponents, mutual suspicion and distrust saved Safdar Jang from utter destruction. He was pardoned and he went back to Oudh. But it was not long after that he died on 5 October, 1754.

Safdar Jang was not a military leader. He would have shone much better in the council chamber than on the field of battle if only his rivals had given him a free hand. He was not a crafty politician either, who could anticipate the moves of his enemies and counteract them. The greatest weakness in him was that, when exasperated, he would go to extremes. This left some of the blackest smudges on his character. However he was a cultured nobleman with taste and a patron of learning. In his private life he was a devoted husband and a loving father. He had a strong sense of justice. Once his son, Shuja'-ud-Daulah misbehaved and was arrested by the *kotwal*. Safdar Jang would not intercede on behalf of his son. Shuja'-ud-Daulah was arrested, severely beaten and imprisoned.

Mirza Jalal-ud-din Haidar, better known as Shuja'-ud-Daulah, was the only son of Safdar Jang and was born on 19 January, 1732.

With Safdar Jang's formal elevation as *wazir* of the Empire, on 19 June, 1748, Jalal-ud-din was honoured by Emperor Ahmad Shah with the title of Shuja'-ud-Daulah and succeeded his father as *mir-i-atish* at the age of sixteen. Later, in the absence of Safdar Jang in the Farrukhabad campaign of 1750, he officiated as *deputy wazir*. A serious situation arose for Shuja'-ud-Daulah when the rumours of his father's defeat and death reached Delhi. Jawid Khan, in alliance with Turani nobles

tried to dismiss Shuja'-ud-Daulah from his high office and to sequester his father's *jagirs*. But this young man was equal to the occasion. With 10,000 brave troops he defied his enemies who, meeting with unexpected opposition, retired.

After the assassination of Jawid Khan, Shuja'-ud-Daulah was invested with various offices by the Emperor. In January 1753, he became superintendent of the *ghusl-khanah* an office bestowed on high *amirs* specially favoured by the Emperor.

On the cessation of the civil war in November, 1753, both father and son left for Lucknow. Shuja'-ud-Daulah was appointed deputy governor by his father but on his death, on 5 October, 1754, he succeeded to the *subah-dari* of Oudh and Allahabad. He was also confirmed in his new post by the Emperor 'Alamgir II.

Safdar Jang's death was a signal to the ever turbulent *zamindars* of the provinces, especially Balwant Singh of Banaras, for acts of open defiance. Shuja'-ud-Daulah proceeded to chastise Balwant Singh. In the meanwhile Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded the subcontinent in 1756 and entered Delhi. The *wazir* 'Imad-ul-Mulk appealed to Shuja'-ud-Daulah for help. He hastily patched up a peace with Balwant Singh. However, soon after the *wazir* entered into an alliance with the Rohillas and the Bangash ruler of Farrukhabad against Shuja'-ud-Daulah. An expedition was organized against him, which was led by Mirza Babur. The prince marched up to Farrukhabad, which became the headquarters of the allied forces. Shuja'-ud-Daulah sent an army to meet the expedition. Later he followed in person. He also enlisted help of the Marathas who sent a strong force to the Doab. Peace was soon declared and the hosts at Farrukhabad melted away. Shuja'-ud-Daulah returned to Lucknow in June 1757.

In July 1759 the Marathas attacked Najib-ud-Daulah who sought refuge at Shukkartal. Shuja'-ud-Daulah

came to his help and his commanders defeated a Maratha force under Govind Ballal. Later, due to the approach of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Marathas raised the siege and Shuja'-ud-Daulah returned to Lucknow in December 1759.

Before the Third Battle of Panipat both Najib-ud-Daulah and the Marathas wooed Shuja'-ud-Daulah. Shuja'-ud-Daulah, besides desiring the *wizarat* for himself, demanded that Shah 'Alam's right to the throne should be confirmed. Abdali readily accepted these terms, and Shuja'-ud-Daulah joined the alliance against the Marathas. He played an important part in the Battle of Panipat and returned to his dominions by the middle of March 1761.

Shuja'-ud-Daulah espoused the cause of Mir Qasim and, as *wazir* of the Empire, rebuked the English saying "You have interfered with the King's country, possessed yourself of districts belonging to the Government..... and turned out and established Nabobs at pleasure without the consent of the Imperial Court..... and crushed the inhabitants by your acts of violence and oppression. to what can all these proceedings be attributed but to an absolute disregard of the Court and wicked design of seizing the country for yourselves?"

The accusation of the Nawab-Wazir had naturally no effect on the British. The Nawab marched towards Bengal and reached the Son river on 23 April, 1724. Carnac fell back before Shuja'-ud-Daulah and retreated to Patna.

On 3 May, 1764 a battle was fought at Panch Pahari. But the Emperor, Mir Qasim, Balwant Singh and Beni Bahadur, Shuja'-ud-Daulah's own *naib*, did not take any part in the fighting. Beni Bahadur has been accused of revealing the whole plan to the British in advance. The result was a foregone conclusion. In spite of stubborn fighting by the loyal portion

of the Oudh troops and Shuja'-ud-Daulah's exertions he had to retreat. But the British were so much impressed by the Nawab's intrepid behaviour that they dared not pursue him.

The parties now prepared for a decisive action. The British, as usual, corrupted the leading generals of the Nawab's army with tempting offers. One of them, Asad Khan openly joined the British before the battle. Balwant Singh of Banaras had been given hopes of protection and assistance by the British in his claims for independence. Raja Jugal Kishore of Bettia and Beni Bahadur, *naib* of the Oudh ruler himself, were already in collusion with the British.

The Battle of Buxar was fought on the 23 October, 1764. It was bitterly contested and the Oudh army acquitted itself well but for the treachery of Balwant Singh who allowed the British army to enter the Nawab's positions through his outpost. Beni Bahadur also kept aloof from the fight. The battle was lost but Lt. Harper admits. "The chance was more than once against us, and I am of the opinion the sepoys would not have been able to stand the cannonade five minutes longer than they did."

After Buxar, Shuja'-ud-Daulah made two attempts to resist the British but not being successful he tried to organise a coalition of the Indian chiefs against the foreigners. He went to Bareilly and tried to persuade Hafiz-Rahmat Khan and other Rohilla leaders to join him but failed. His similar attempts to enlist the sympathy of Najib-ud-Daulah and the Bangash ruler of Farrukhabad were not more successful.

An uneasy alliance was patched up between Shuja'-ud-Daulah and Malhar Rao Holkar but even a short engagement with the British at Kora in May 1765 made the Marathas lose heart and they fled from the field.

Shuja'-ud-Daulah, a wiser but a sadder man, returned to Farrukhabad. He must have ruminated bitterly over

his grandiose schemes to organise a united front against expanding British power. A treaty was signed on the 16 August, 1765, and with it ended the chance, if there was any, of saving the subcontinent from passing under foreign domination.

Shuja'-ud-Daulah became an ardent supporter of the Britishers who had restored him to his flourishing dominions. But even his pro-British feelings did not blind him to the danger of free trade by the Europeans in his dominions.

The much debated and most important political event of Shuja'-ud-Daulah's career is the Rohilla War which has been dealt with elsewhere.¹

William Franklin, a contemporary of Shuja'-ud-Daulah, declares that he was "active and vigorous in his mind, he was bold, daring and enterprising, which he manifested on various occasions and in situations of danger and difficulty."²

He was a good diplomat and an able administrator. In spite of the best efforts of the British he would not allow foreign merchants to indulge in unfavourable competition with his people. He prohibited the drain of gold, silver or other precious specie from his dominions and always maintained a favourable balance of trade.

He was also a great patron of learning and many scholars were supported by subsistence allowances and grants of land. Fyzabad became the asylum of most of the learned men of the time because of the political upheavals in Delhi. Mirza *Sauda*, Mian Ja'far 'Ali *Hasrat* and Ashraf 'Ali Khan *Fughan* adorned his court. Siraj-ud-din 'Ali Khan *Arzu* and Mir Hasan were attached to his brother-in-law Salar Jang. A number of other poets embellished the cultured society of Fyzabad and Lucknow who went there, attracted by the munificence of the Nawab.

Mirza Yahya 'Ali Khan *alias* Mirza Amani succeeded

¹ Chapter X.

² *The History of the Reign of Shah-Aulum*, p. 67.

his father, Shuja'-ud-Daulah, as the *subahdar* of Oudh and Allahabad including the recently conquered province of Rohilkhand in 1775. The Emperor Shah 'Alam II later conferred on him the high office of the *wazir* of the Empire and the title of *Asaf-ud-Daulah*.

The political situation had changed completely. The British had emerged as the strongest military and political power and were supreme from Bengal to the confines of the Panjab. The Oudh ruler had become a vassal, in name and in fact, of the East India Company. He could not refuse the orders, diplomatically called requests, of the governor-general who adopted two methods of strengthening the paralysing grip of the Company on the Nawab's dominions. The first was to increase British military strength, and agents, who acted as spies on the Nawab and his court, were appointed as ministers of state.

The first result of the treaty with the new Nawab signed on 21 May, 1775 was to raise the expenses of the British brigade to Rs. 2,60,000 per month. Simultaneously, the Nawab was compelled to cede the *zamindari* of Banaras yielding a revenue of Rs. 22,20,000 to the Company. Thus at one stroke the state was saddled with a heavy expenditure in total disregard of solemn treaties entered into with the preceding Nawab and the revenues of Oudh were considerably slashed.

In 1777 another brigade, originally called 'temporary' but which later became permanent, was foisted on the unwilling ruler. In 1779 the expenses of the 'temporary' brigade increased to more than Rs. 6,00,000 and that of local troops under British officers to more than Rs. 4,00,000 above the estimate. These increases were in addition to the civil expenses which "without an authority from the Court of Directors, or any record in the books of the Council, had gradually and secretly swelled to a great amount."

The Nawab complained of the hardships and distress

caused to him by the exactions of the Company, for which he received a severe reprimand. One can well imagine the mental anguish of the Nawab when it is recollected that the annual revenue of Shuja'-ud-Daulah, at his death in January, 1775, was three crores and sixty lakhs of rupees. Now, in 1779, it had been reduced to little more than one-half and fell still further in subsequent years.

Shuja'-ud-Daulah had left treasure worth two crores of rupees, which was deposited in the vaults of the female apartments. On his death his widow and mother, who are generally known in history as the Begums of Oudh, claimed it under a will of the deceased Nawab.

Asaf-ud-Daulah, whom the Company's servants "robbed..... without scruple by loans advanced at an exorbitant interest, and pensions and *Jaghires* wrung from him in return," wanted to deprive the Begums of their wealth. Mr. Bristow, the British resident, however, supported their stand and "constrained the vizier to affix his seal to a deed, under the guarantee of the Government in Calcutta, which assigned three-fourths of his state property to them."¹ Nevertheless when Asaf-ud-Daulah met Hastings at Chunargarh in 1781 and suggested that he should be allowed to seize the Begums' *jagirs* and treasure "to enable him to discharge his obligations to the Company," the governor-general readily agreed to their spoliation. The agreement having been made, Hastings was anxious to have the plan executed without any delay. The remonstrances made by the Begums proved unavailing. Mr. Middleton who had replaced Bristow² "applied himself to quicken the flickering energy of the vizier." Their palaces in Fyzabad were besieged and the two eunuchs who acted as their advisers were put in irons and sent to Lucknow

¹ J. C. Marshman, *The History of India*, Part I, p. 348.

² Hastings was deadly against him and refers to him as "the wretch, Bristow". He says: "I will not employ Bristow, though my life should be the forfeit of my refusal." (Gleig's *Memoirs of Hastings*, vol. II, p. 336 as quote¹ by Thornton, vol. II, p. 336. It is significant that he did employ the "wretch Bristow, not very long after writing these words.

as captives, where they were badly handled by the Nawab's men. The Begums, unable to withstand a regular blockade by the combined forces of the Company and the Nawab, agreed to surrender. They were put to great hardships and ultimately forced to yield a treasure worth a million sterling. Their servants were tortured regarding which Edward Thornton says: "It seems impossible to exempt those to whom they owe their sufferings from the charge of cruelty, or to deny that the series of transactions of which those sufferings form part, present a very discreditable passage in history of the connection of England and India".¹

Hasting's conduct in this affair was most reprehensible. It was necessary to find a pretext for the spoliation of the Begums. Hastings assigned two main reasons: that the wealth belonged by right to the Nawab and that the Begums had encouraged the rebellion of Chait Singh of Banaras. The first is obviously weak and unacceptable because his government had agreed to this arrangement six years earlier. There is little evidence for the second.

Attempts have been made to justify Hasting's action on the basis of the Company's financial difficulties arising out of the Maratha and Mysore wars. This is poor justification for the violation of elementary principles of justice. Hastings has to bear almost the entire responsibility for this high-handedness and there can be no doubt that "the Nawab would have hung back from such severe measures against respected ladies of his family, and that even Hasting's own British officers did not like the job."²

There was some relief from the crushing financial burden when Lord Cornwallis became governor-general in September, 1786. "It appeared" says Mill "the Nawab had paid to the Company, under different titles, at the rate of 84,00,000 lacs of rupees per annum; though by the

¹ *The History of the British Empire in India*, Vol. II, p. 332.

² E. Thompson and G. T. Garrat, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, London, 1934, p. 163.

treaty of 1775, he had bound himself to the annual payment of only 31,21,000 and by the treaty of 1781, to that of 34,20,000 rupees."

By the new arrangement Cornwallis fixed 50 lakhs as the annual payment, which "should embrace every possible claim," and "declared that this was sufficient to indemnify the Company for all the expense which it was necessary for them to incur in consequence of their connexion with the Vizir. In other words, he declared that, for the nine preceding years, an unjustifiable extortion, to the amount of 34,00,000 lacs per annum, had been practised on that dependent prince."¹ At the same time the governor-general made the solemn announcement saying "We undertake the defence of his (Nawab's) country; in return, he agrees to defray the real expenses incurred by an engagement of so much value to himself: and the internal administration of his affairs is left to his exclusive management."²

Lord Cornwallis paid a visit to Lucknow in 1787 and was very much perturbed "to be witness of the disordered state of his (Nawab's) finances and Government and of the desolated appearance of the country." The governor-general's allegation was countered by the Nawab with the cynical remark that "whilst he was not certain of the extent of our (English) demands upon him, he had no real interest in being economical in his expenses; and that while we interfered in the internal management of his affairs, his own authority, and that of his ministers, were despised by his own subjects."³

The Directors also were not deceived by the specious arguments, for the desolation of the country, trotted out by Cornwallis. They, in an unguarded moment, declared "the present unfortunate state of the country may, in our opinion, be fairly attributed to a combination of causes...The immense drain of specie from that country

¹ Mill, *History of British India*, IV, 420.

² *Ibid.*, IV, 314.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

of late years, amounting, from September 1783, to February 1794, to the enormous sum of two crores and thirty-nine lacs of rupees (2,39,00,000) exclusive of what may have been sent down to Calcutta to answer the bills drawn for the payment of the troops, and on private account, stands foremost in our opinion, among the causes that have operated so much to its prejudice."¹

The other charge that has been uniformly levelled against the rulers of Oudh, besides financial mismanagement, is mal-administration of the country.

The ministers responsible for administration were creatures of the governor-general forced upon the unwilling rulers. Discussing the relations of the resident with the Nawab's minister Warren Hastings laid down that "either the Resident must be the slave and vassal of the minister, or the minister at the absolute devotion of the Resident." Referring further to a minister, Hastings said, "He exists by his dependence on the influence of our government; and if he will submit to hold his office on such conditions as I require, I would prefer him to any other. At the same time, it will be necessary to declare to him, in the plainest terms, the footing and condition on which he shall be permitted to retain his place, with the alternative of dismissal, and a scrutiny into his past conduct, if he refuses."² Naturally the ministers of state looked more to the resident for guidance than to their own master; constant interference from the residency hampered their administration.

The only notable event in Asaf-ud-Daulah's reign was the restoration of order at Rampur. On the death of Faizullah Khan in 1794, his eldest son Muhammad 'Ali Khan ascended the throne. But he was murdered by the younger brother Ghulam Muhammad Khan who became the Nawab. Asaf-ud-Daulah, with Mr. Cherry the resident and Sir Robert Abercromby, marched against

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

² *Ibid.*, IV, 482.

and defeated the Rohillas. The late Muhammad 'Ali Khan's son, Ahmad 'Ali Khan, was seated on the throne with a *jagir* of ten lacs of rupees.

By the time Asaf-ud-Daulah came to the throne British power was irresistible in India. All the Indian chiefs carried out the behests of the Company without demur and Asaf-ud-Daulah was no exemption. But he felt his dependence on the British to be galling in the extreme. It is said that being helpless against the domination of the Company he intentionally neglected his last illness which proved fatal.

Asaf-ud-Daulah was succeeded by Mirza Wazir 'Ali Khan with the concurrence of the resident. But the new Nawab though a young lad of seventeen years was of independent views. He soon became *persona non grata* with the British.

On receiving disturbing reports the governor-general, Sir John Shore, came to Lucknow. Mirza Wazir 'Ali Khan "was represented as extremely profuse in his expenditure, and therefore, likely to absorb the funds from which annual payments to the English might proceed, as of violent, un-governable will, and therefore unlikely to be obedient to the English; and finally as altogether adverse to the English; and likely to use his utmost endeavours to free himself from their yoke."¹

He was deposed and ordered to live at Banaras where during an altercation, he killed Mr. Cherry, the resident, on 14 January, 1799. With a number of troopers he left Banaras and fought the British successfully. Ultimately he sought asylum with the raja of Jaipur who handed him over to the British in 1800. He was interned in Calcutta where he died at the age of 36 in June, 1817.

Sa'adat 'Ali Khan became Nawab after the deposition of Mirza Wazir 'Ali Khan.

His father Shuja'-ud-Daulah had, in 1774, put him in charge of the recently conquered province of Rohilkhand.

¹ *Ibid.*, VI, 52.

But on his death Warren Hastings forced Sa'adat Ali Khan to retire from Rohilkhand in favour of his brother Asaf-ud-Daulah who, in lieu thereof, bestowed the *zamindari* of Banaras on the Company.

A new treaty was signed between the Nawab and the British which raised the annual subsidy to 76 lacs of rupees. Besides other stipulations the Nawab also agreed "to pay twelve lacs of rupees to the English, as compensation money, for the expenses of placing him on the *musned*." Naturally the Court of Directors were satisfied to find that "the annual subsidy is increased upwards of twenty lacs of rupees besides the acquisition of a fortress (*i.e.* Allahabad) in the Oudh dominions, of the greatest consequence in the scale of general defence."¹

The substantial increase in the annual subsidy gave entire satisfaction to everybody concerned from Calcutta to London. But it is interesting to note the change in policy towards Oudh consequent upon the expansionist ambitions of the British under Lord Wellesley.

In the beginning of his regime Wellesley had nothing to say against the Nawab. He, on the contrary, testified that Sa'adat 'Ali Khan would introduce "such a system of order and economy into the management of his finances as will enable him to be more punctual in his future payments." As to good government in Oudh the governor-general declared in his despatch of April, 1798, "that the most perfect tranquillity continues to prevail in the Vizir's dominions."

Suddenly, we find a change in the great pro-consul's attitude. He discovered, overnight, that everything was rotten in the dominions of Oudh and there were only two ways of putting them right.

Wellesley's method was to annex large portions of the Nawab's territories and to increase the number of British troops for which of course the Nawab paid. This was what the governor-general called a reform, writes

¹ *Ibid.*, VI, 174-75.

Mill, "of the military establishments of the Vizir: the total annihilation of his military power, and the resignation of himself and his country to the army of another State."

Wellesley had already, in pursuance of his policy, made the necessary changes at the Lucknow residency. Lumsden had been replaced by the Adjutant-General, Lt-Col. Scott, as resident in view of the intended military operations. The new resident gave his impressions of the situation on 29 September, 1799, "I am led to conclude that whilst he (the Nawab) is determined to fulfil, with minute regularity the peculiar engagements with the Company, his views are directed to the enjoyment of a full authority over his household affairs, hereditary dominions and subjects, according to the most strict interpretation of the clause of the seventeenth article of the treaty executed at Lucknow. I have no conception that he aspires, either now or in prospect, to political independence. What he aims at is the independent management of the interior concerns of his dominions, to the exclusion of all interference and inspection on the part of the English government, and to the gradual diminution of its influence over the internal administration of the country."¹

Sa'adat 'Ali Khan knew that his own ministers were British spies. So he did not take the ministers into confidence; and by conducting state business himself, he prevented the leakage of state secrets to the resident. Annoyed at this the governor-general writes to the resident on 26 September, 1799, "The present condition of his (the Nawab's) government appears to preclude you from the information necessary to your first steps in the proposed reforms."² He directed the resident "to insist that the Vizir shall place his government in such a state as shall afford you the requisite means of information, as well as carrying the

¹ *Ibid.*, VI, p. 199.

² *Ibid.*, p. 199.

intended regulations into complete and speedy effect.”¹

On 5 November, 1799, Wellesley asked the *wazir* to “reform” his military establishment to which he replied that the reform of his military establishment upon the principles proposed by the governor-general would annihilate his authority in his own dominions.

Wellesley, being found out, lost patience and gave up all pretence to diplomacy. “The resident was directed immediately,” writes the governor-general to the home authorities on 31 August, 1800 “either for himself, or in concert with the Commanding Officer at Cawnpore, as the nature of the case might appear to him to require, to direct the several Corps to move to such points of his Excellency’s dominions, as might appear most advisable.”²

The *wazir* made a last minute attempt to avoid the catastrophe by appealing to Wellesley: “Should the Company, no longer putting confidence in the sincerity of my friendship, deprive me of the direction of my own army, and spread their troops over my dominions, my authority in the provinces would be annihilated; nor would my orders be attended to on any occasion, whether trifling or momentous.....By a reference to the second article of the treaty, it will be evident to your Lordship, that on my accession to the *musned*, the force designed for the defence of these dominions was increased beyond what it had been in any former period: whilst on my part I to defray the expense of the said augmentation. But in no part of the said article it is written or hinted, that after the lapse of a certain number of years, a further permanent augmentation should take place.....An augmentation of the troops, without existing necessity, and making me answerable for the expense attending the increase, is inconsistent, with treaty and seems inexpedient”.³

Unable to answer the irresistible logic of the case Wellesley called it an impeachment of “the honour and

¹ *Ibid.*, VI, p. 200.

² *Ibid.*, p. 214.

³ *Ibid.*, VI, p. 217-18.

justice of the British Government." The battle of wits ended when several battalions entered Oudh and the Nawab-Wazir had to yield.

In November, 1800 "demand for second body of new troops was presented to the Vizir." His protests, again went unheeded. Nothing would stop Wellesley, who had decided that "the exclusive management of the civil and military government of that country shall be transferred to the Company."¹ To ensure payment the Nawab was asked "to make a cession to the Company in perpetual sovereignty, of such a portion of his territories, as shall be fully adequate, in their present impoverished condition, to defray these indispensable expenses."²

At long last Sa'adat 'Ali Khan had to sign a treaty on 10 November, 1801 by which territories yielding an annual revenue of Rs. 1,35,23,374 were ceded to the Company. They included Allahabad, the Doab, Rohilkhand, Azamgarh, Gorakhpur, etc.

Maladministration and misrule have been the pet accusations, made by Wellesley and other governors-general, against the rulers of Oudh. But "it is declared," says Mill, "in the strongest and most explicit terms, by several of the Company's servants, best acquainted with Indian affairs in their examination before the House of Commons, in 1806, that, not in respect to army, judicature, or taxation, was the situation of Oudh, though viewed with such horror by the governor-general, more unfavourable, than that of other native governments of India, with which it might truly be regarded as upon a level."³

Sa'adat 'Ali Khan was poisoned to death, as the result of a diabolical plot, on 11 July, 1814.⁴

Sa'adat 'Ali Khan was the only Indian ruler among his contemporaries, who fulfilled his financial commitments

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

² *Ibid.*, p. 230.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁴ K. Haiydar: *Qasr-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 199.

to the Company on the due date. "No failure or deficiency whatever was experienced" declared the Nawab in March, 1801 "in the discharge of the expenses of the new troops, and in the payment of the *Kists* of the fixed subsidy. On the contrary, these expenses and *Kists* of the fixed subsidy, and the charges of the additional troops, have been completely paid to the end of January, 1801, and Colonel Scott has expressed his acknowledgment on the occasion."¹

Though left with half of his territories he succeeded in curtailing unnecessary expenditure and improving the finances of the state. "If there was," writes Kaye, "at any time, hope for Oudh under purely native administration, it was during the Wazeership of Sa'adat Ali, for he was not a bad man, and he appears to have had rather enlightened views with respect to some important administrative questions."²

No less a person than Sir Henry Lawrence admits that "Sa'adat Ali Khan was in advance of the Bengal Government of the day on revenue arrangement." Lawrence adds that "Sa'adat Ali's maladministration was mainly attributable to English interference, to the resentment he felt for his wrongs and the bitterness of soul with which he must have received all advice from his oppressors, no less than to the impunity with which they enabled him to play the tyrant."³

He was a scholar himself and a great patron of learning. The famous poet Insha'allah Khan *Insha* was his court-poet. Mir Taqi Mir and Mirza Qatil were also attached to his court.

Another great British authority who cannot be accused of any partiality towards him describes the Nawab as follows: "Sa'adat Ali Khan was a man of great general ability, had mixed in the society of British officers in different parts of India, had been well trained to habits

¹ Mill. *History of British India*, VI, 222.

² Kaye; *History of the Sepoy War*, I, 118.

³ *Ibid.*, (I, 118 F.N.).

of business, understood thoroughly the character, institutions, and requirements of his people, and, above all was a sound judge of the relative merits and capacities of the men from whom he had to select his officers, and a vigilant supervisor of their actions. This discernment and discrimination of character, and vigilant supervision served him through life, and the men who served him ably and honestly always felt confident in his protection and support. He had a thorough knowledge of the rights and duties of his officers and subjects, and a strong will to secure the one and enforce the other.”¹

The British resident, in pursuance of an established practice, had always rejected the claims of intelligent members of the Oudh family to the throne. Ghazi-ud-din Haidar who was not of sound mind and had been declared incompetent by his own father, was preferred to his more learned and competent brothers such as Shams-ud-Daulah and Nasir-ud Daulah.

He succeeded his father, Sa'adat 'Ali Khan, on July 12, 1814. As he was totally unfit for the high office to which he had with set purpose been raised by the British, he became a willing tool in carrying out their designs. The most notable event of his reign is the assistance rendered by him to the British during the Nepal War.

To finance this war Hastings asked Ghazi-ud-din Haidar for help. The Nawab gave him a loan of one crore, eight lakhs and fifty thousand rupees (Rs. 1,08,50,000) at 6 per cent. per annum commencing from 14 November, 1814. The monthly interest came to Rs. 54,250 or Rs. 6,51,000 annually.²

More money was demanded in March 1815 and the Nawab gave another loan of one crore of rupees at 6 per cent. per annum besides 300 elephants, etc. In commutation of this loan the Company ceded the district

¹ Sir W. H. Sleeman: *Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh*, II, 189-90.

² Aitchison: *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, II, 158.

of Khyreegur and "also the low lands lying between Khyreegur and the hills" etc. to the Nawab by a treaty signed on 1 May, 1816.¹

When on tour in Delhi, the governors-general presented *nazrs* to the Emperor and were not allowed to sit in his presence. Lord Hastings demanded a chair in contravention of the established practice, but Akbar II refused. This piqued Hastings. "The Nawab Ghazi-ud-din Haidar," writes Sir Henry Lawrence, "was encouraged to assume the title of King; Lord Hastings calculated on thus exciting a rivalry between the Oudh and Delhi families."² Ghazi-ud-din Haidar became His Majesty the King of Oudh on 9 October, 1819.

In 1825 the new king, to relieve the Company from the financial difficulties caused by the protracted hostilities in Burma, gave a third loan of a crore of rupees at 5 per cent. interest.

In 1826 a fourth loan of half a crore of rupees was advanced, repayable after two years at 5 per cent. interest.

After giving more than three and a half crores of rupees to the Company Ghazi-ud-din Haidar died on 19 October, 1827.

Nasir-ud-din Haidar succeeded his father as king of Oudh on 20 October, 1827. He was a debauchee and a drunkard. On being raised to the throne he sank deeper into the morass of his habits. Bentinck met the king and gave him some advice; the British always advised the rulers of Oudh with a flourish but, secretly through their agents, hampered the administration and all efforts to reform it. Nasir-ud-din died in July 1837.

¹ *Ibid.* II, 160.

² *Calcutta Review.* III, 119.

CHAPTER VIII

NIZAM-UL-MULK ASAF JAH I

One of the most dominating personalities in the later days of the Mughuls, Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah made a remarkable contribution to the history of the Muslims in the Hind-Pakistan subcontinent. He is chiefly remembered as the founder of a dynasty in the Deccan. It would not, however, be a true appreciation of this great man to remember him merely as the founder of a large Muslim state on the ruins of the Mughul Empire. In fact, when the Empire declined this Turanian statesman, a strong imperialist of the school of 'Alamgir, restored and re-established imperial authority in the Deccan by checking the rising tide of Maratha aggression. By his tact, courage, wisdom and beneficent administration he put down anarchy and established law and order.

Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah came of an illustrious Turani family, which traced its descent from the well-known *sufi*, Shaikh Shihab-ud-din of Kurdistan. 'Alam Shaikh, the great grand-father of Nizam-ul-Mulk, was a celebrated man of letters and a distinguished *sufi* of his time. Khwajah 'Abid, son of 'Alam Shaikh, was a worthy successor of his father. He served with distinction Subhan Quli Khan, the ruler of Bukhara, as his chief *qazi* and *shaikh-ul-islam*. In 1654 he came to the court of Emperor Shah Jahan on his way to pilgrimage to Mecca. The Emperor honoured him with gifts and offered him a post in the imperial service, which the latter promised to accept after his return from Mecca.

In 1657 when Khwajah 'Abid returned from the *haji*, Shah Jahan was ill and his sons were preparing for a

war of succession. Khwajah 'Abid entered the service of Prince Aurangzib and greatly contributed to his success in the conflict. Khwajah 'Abid fought with distinction in the battles of Khwajah and Samugarh and was rewarded with the rank of 4000 *zat* and 700 *sawar*. He served the Emperor 'Alamgir in various capacities and rose to the position of a *subahdar*. For his distinguished service in the Deccan campaigns he obtained the title of Qilich Khan. He died in 1687 at the time of the siege of the fort of Golconda. Qilich Khan left behind him several sons, Shihab-ud-din Khan, Mujahid Khan, Hamid Khan and 'Abd-ur-Rahim. Shihab-ud-din Khan, was the father of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah.

Shihab-ud-din Khan came to India in 1669 and entered the imperial service. He married Safiyah Khanam, daughter of Shah Jahan's chief minister Sa'd-ullah Khan. In the Rajput wars and in the campaigns against the Marathas, Shihab-ud-din displayed extraordinary courage and enterprise which earned him the title of Ghazi-ud-din Khan Firuz Jang. His plan and strategy led to the capture of the fortress of Bijapur and an appreciative Emperor called him *Farzand-i-Arjumand*. In 1688 Firuz Jang lost his eye-sight from an attack of plague. Still he retained his rank and command and rendered valuable services in the Deccan campaigns. In 1703, 'Alamgir honoured him with the title of *Sipah-salar* for his brilliant victory over the Maratha chief Namaji Sinc̣nia. After a distinguished career Ghazi-ud-din Firuz Jang died at Ahmadabad in 1707 in the reign of Bahadur Shah.

Nizam-ul-Mulk, son of Ghazi-ud-din Firuz Jang, was born on August 11, 1671. His name was Mir Qamar-ud-din. In his early age, Mir Qamar-ud-din accompanied his father on his Deccan campaigns and in 1681 he received the title of Chin Qilich Khan from 'Alamgir. Chin Qilich made his mark as a soldier and a general in a campaign at Nagori near Bijapur and in the

capture of the fort of Parali from the Marathas in 1700. Thenceforth his promotion was rapid and he was raised to the *subahdari* of Bijapur. In 1705 Chin Qilich Khan played a conspicuous part in the capture of Wakin-khera, a stronghold of the unruly Berads. In recognition of his ability and services, he was promoted to the rank of 5000 *zat* and 5000 *sawar*. From this time Chin Qilich Khan acquired great influence over the Emperor, so much so that he was consulted on all important matters of state.¹

Chin Qilich Khan and his father remained neutral in the dispute over the succession that broke out after the death of Emperor 'Alamgir. Shah 'Alam finally emerged triumphant and became Emperor with the name of Bahadur Shah. To win the influential Turani element in the Empire, he appointed the Turani leaders Chin Qilich Khan and Firuz Jang to the governments of Oudh and Gujrat respectively. He also conferred on the former the title of *Khan Dauran Bahadur*. But Chin Qilich Khan was soon disgusted at the absolute power assumed by his rival Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan and the Iranian party in the affairs of the state. He resigned and retired from service. He even thought of renouncing the world and becoming a *faqir*. After the death of his father, he felt still more dejected. In his retirement, however, he became intimate with Prince 'Azim-ush-Shan, who intensely disliked the overweening authority of Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan.

After the death of Bahadur Shah in 1712, Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan assumed the role of a king-maker and, eliminating the other sons of the late Emperor, placed the imbecile Prince Jahandar Shah on the throne in order to ensure his own supremacy in the Empire. Chin Qilich Khan, who was still living in retirement, supported Prince 'Azim-ush-Shan. In order to help him, he even began

¹ *Ma'asir-i-'Alamgiri*, pp. 441 and 449;

Yusuf Hussain Khan, *Nizamul-Mulk Asaf Jah I*, p. 48.

a march towards Lahore, but on the way he heard of the defeat and death of the prince. Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan wanted to crush Chin Qilich Khan. However, better sense prevailed and he was reinstalled in his rank of 7000 *zat* and 7000 *sawar* with the title of *Ghazi-ud-din Khan Firuz Jang*. In conciliating Chin Qilich Khan, Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan had the motive of wishing to win over the Turanian element to his authority. Moreover, by this gesture of good-will, he wanted to serve the deeper purpose of using him against the pretender, Farrukh Siyar, son of 'Azim-ush-Shan.

Farrukh Siyar was his father's deputy in the *subahdari* of Bengal. He moved to join his father. When he came to Patna, he received the news of his father's defeat and death and of the accession of Jahandar Shah. The prince, however, enlisted the support of Sayyid Husain 'Ali and Sayyid 'Abdullah the chief of the Barha Sayyids,¹ and advanced towards Agra. Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan sent Prince 'Aziz-ud-din, son of Jahandar Shah, and Chin Qilich Khan to check the advance of Farrukh Siyar. Chin Qilich Khan prudently stayed in Agra in order to defend it against an attack but 'Aziz-ud-din rashly advanced towards Etawah and thence to Khajwah and suffered a serious defeat. On the news of this disaster, Jahandar Shah and Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan started towards Agra at the head of a large army and met the enemy at Samugarh near Agra.

In the meantime, Sayyid 'Abdullah Khan had started secret negotiations with the Turanian chiefs, Chin Qilich Khan and his cousin, Muhammad Amin Khan. Partly out of sympathy for the son of his friend, 'Azim-ush-Shan and partly out of jealousy at the ascendancy of his rival Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan and the Iranian party, Chin Qilich Khan and his fellow-chiefs stood aloof on the battle-field.² This greatly weakened Zu-'l-Fiqar

¹ Khafi Khan, II, 697-98.

² *Ibid.*

Khan and contributed to the victory of Farrukh Siyar (January 6, 1713). The Battle of Samugarh led to the fall of Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan and his party, the Sayyid Brothers now became supreme. Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan and Jahandar Shah were put to death. The new Emperor Farrukh Siyar rewarded Sayyid 'Abdullah with the office of chief minister and title of *Qutb-ul-Mulk* and Sayyid Husain 'Ali with the post of *bakhshi* and the title of *Amir-ul-Umara Firuz-Jang Sipahsalar*. For his friendly neutrality on the field of Samugarh, Chin Qilich Khan obtained the title of *Nizam-ul-Mulk Bahadur Fath Jang* and was appointed viceroy of the Deccan.¹

Several considerations induced the Sayyid Brothers to recommend Nizam-ul-Mulk for appointment to the viceroyalty of the Deccan and the *faujdari* of the Carnatic. They wanted to enlist the support of the Turanians through Nizam-ul-Mulk. Besides, they thought that the presence of the influential Turanian chief at the capital was dangerous for the consolidation of their newly acquired authority in the Empire. Moreover, the disorder and confusion that prevailed in the Deccan required a strong and experienced man of the calibre of Nizam-ul-Mulk to restore law and authority in that unhappy region.

Immediately after his assumption of office at Aurangabad in July, 1713, Nizam-ul-Mulk set himself the task of reorganising the administrative machinery of his charge, which included the *subahs* of Khandesh, Berar, Aurangabad, Bidar, Haidarabad and Bijapur². He found that his predecessor in the viceroyalty, Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan, had, by his inexpedient policy, left a legacy of administrative chaos. In order to have a hold on the Deccan, Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan had persuaded Prince A'zam Shah after the death of Emperor 'Alamgir to release

¹ *Ibid.*

² During the later years of 'Alamgir the *subahs* of Haidarabad and Bijapur were enlarged with new acquisitions. Yusuf Husain Khan, *Nizamul-Mulk Asaf Jah I*, p. 68.

from his custody Shahu, with whom he had contracted friendship. When he was viceroy in the reign of Bahadur Shah, he entered into an agreement with Shahu, conferring on the Maratha chief the right of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* for the whole of Deccan.¹ After the death of the chief minister Mun'im Khan, Zu'l-Fiqar Khan directed Daud Khan Pani, his deputy in the viceroyalty, to come to terms with the Marathas on his behalf, allowing them one-fourth of the revenue but reserving its collection and payment to his own agents. Again, through Zu'l-Fiqar Khan's influence, the Maratha chief, Namaji Sindhia, was given the *mansab* of 7000 *zat* and 7000 *sawar* and was assigned the duty of collecting the revenues of the province of Aurangabad.

These concessions of Zu'l-Fiqar Khan had greatly increased the resources of the Marathas and helped them in consolidating their power to an extent that they established a parallel government in the Deccan, dividing the Mughul territory among themselves. They had appointed their agents to collect the *chauth* and to exact toll from merchants and travellers. The rapacity and exaction of these agents and the extortion of blackmail by the Maratha free-booters had created a state of lawlessness and insecurity in the Deccan. They defied imperial authority whenever they were obstructed in their extortions.²

According to Khafi Khan, the very arrival of Nizam-ul-Mulk at Aurangabad greatly improved the position of Mughul administration in the Deccan. He writes, "The might of his hereditary sword and his own sound judgement brought about, as they had done before, a great abatement of the ravages perpetrated by the Marathas upon the country and upon the caravans, without his having to resort to war with the wide enemy."³ Nizam-ul-Mulk was a strong imperialist and was

¹ Khafi Khan, II, 582 and 625.

² Yusuf Husain, *Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I*, p. 68.

³ Khafi Khan, II, p. 737.

opposed to the idea of sharing the imperial administration with any other authority. So, he was determined to suppress the authority of the local Maratha collectors. Khafi Khan says that Nizam-ul-Mulk's pride was too great to submit to *chauth*. He withdrew the concessions made by Zu-'l-Fiqar to Shahu, alleging that they were inconsistent with the authority invested in the viceroy of the Deccan. He forthwith issued orders to the *fauj-dars* and *zila'dars* directing them to oust Maratha agents from the province of Aurangabad.

Nizam-ul-Mulk then set himself to restore peace and prosperity to the devastated territory of the Deccan. He assured security of life and property to the peasantry and stationed troops at vantage points to keep off the Maratha free-booters. He held a thorough investigation into the grievances of the people, in the course of which he learnt that Zu-'l-Fiqar Khan's deputy, Daud Khan Pani, and his subordinates used to appropriate for themselves twenty lakhs of rupees annually from revenue. To safeguard against such abuses he established a uniform system of assessment in the *subah* of Aurangabad, where he first introduced his reforms which were later extended to other *subahs*. He warned his officers against unjust exactions from the people.

Nizam-ul-Mulk brought diplomacy and vigour to bear on the Maratha problem. He took advantage of the dissensions prevailing between the Kolhapur party, which owned allegiance to Bai and her son, Shambhaji, and the partisans of Shahu. He skilfully fanned the flame of their discord and thus kept them internally busy and weakened their strength. Moreover, he gave protection to Shahu's *senapati*, Chandrasen Jadav, who had left the Maratha court on account of Peshwa Balaji Vishvanath's ascendancy in the affairs of state. Nizam ul-Mulk gave him a *jagir* and a *mansab* of 7000 *zat* and 7000 *sawar*, and through this artful Maratha chief, he made a friendly alliance with Shambhaji of Kolhapur.

Meanwhile, Nizam-ul-Mulk followed an energetic policy in dealing with the Maratha raiders. His forces expelled Shahu's officers who raided the Godavari area. This brought the Peshwa to the field; he was however, severely beaten near Purandhar. After this the Marathas ceased to be a menace to the Mughul *subahs*. Nizam-ul-Mulk also suppressed the turbulent land-holders and unruly Maratha population of his territory and this re-established authority and peace in the country.

When Nizam-ul-Mulk was busy introducing an efficient and enlightened administrative system in the Deccan, the court party imprudently interfered in his work. In 1714 he was recalled to the court and Sayyid Husain 'Ali was appointed viceroy of the Deccan. Indeed he was ousted from the viceroyalty by Husain 'Ali, who procured it from the puppet Emperor in order to ensure his supremacy in the Empire with the resources of the Deccan. When Nizam-ul-Mulk arrived at the court, Qutb-ul-Mulk said to him apologetically, "you deserve *wizarat* more than any body else, not to mention the *subahdari*. The *amir-ul-umara's* going to the Deccan had become indispensable in order to quell the disturbances there. Now any *subah* you like will be yours for the mere asking." Feeling disgusted with the atmosphere of intrigue at the court, Nizam-ul-Mulk, however, preferred to retire to his *jagir* in the *faujdari* of Moradabad.

His untimely recall proved suicidal to the imperial authority in the Deccan, because no sooner was his strong hand withdrawn than the Marathas again burst into the Mughul *subahs* and re-established their hold on them. The new viceroy, Sayyid Husain 'Ali had neither the ability nor the experience of Nizam-ul-Mulk to deal with the Maratha problem. His forces suffered several reverses in fighting against the Marathas. This encouraged disaffection and lawlessness in the country.

The Marathas defied his authority, realised the revenue and dismissed the Mughul collectors. Khafi Khan says that in the provinces of Bijapur and the Carnatic in particular, the *amir-ul-umara's* rule existed only in name.¹

Finding his position thus undermined and also considering that an agreement with the Marathas would enable him to enlist their help in maintaining his hold on the Deccan and his supremacy in the Empire, the *amir-ul-umara* conceded in 1718 to Raja Shahu the right granted to him by Zu'l-Fiqar Khan. The Mughul officers were to realise *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* and to pay them to the Maratha agents. He also gave to the Marathas 25 per cent. of the *abwabs* and *rahdari* realised from the peasantry, merchants and travellers. Thus, they were entitled to half the total revenue recorded in the government rent roll.² Two Maratha generals were to reside at Aurangabad with a body of troops in order to safeguard the interests of the Maratha court. Shahu's sovereignty over his hereditary dominions was confirmed and his mother and half-brother were to be released from custody in Delhi. Recent Maratha conquests in Berar, Gondwana and the Carnatic were recognised. In return Shahu was to pay an annual tribute of ten lakhs of rupees to the Emperor. He also promised to keep fifteen thousand horse at the disposal of the viceroy. This agreement was a defeat for the Empire and undid the work of Nizam-ul-Mulk.

Farrukh Siyar, desiring to free himself from the galling tutelage of the Sayyid Brothers, was constantly plotting to overthrow them.

For this purpose he hoped to use Nizam-ul-Mulk, who had been ousted from the viceroyalty of the Deccan. He was summoned from Moradabad and promised the

¹ Khafi Khan, II, 780.

² *Ibid.*, 784.

ministership after the fall of the Sayyids. A man of shrewd intelligence, Nizam-ul-Mulk refrained from committing himself to any definite opinion. Very soon he was, however, disgusted at the levity of the Emperor and his favourites, when Farrukh Siyar failed in employing him to further his designs, he estranged him still further by confiscating all his estates in Moradabad and bestowing them upon Muhammad Murad. On the other hand, Qutb-ul-Mulk approached Nizam-ul-Mulk with the promise of the *subahdari* of Malwa. Aggrieved at the treatment meted out to him by the Emperor, Nizam-ul-Mulk accepted his offer and promised to be neutral in the struggle between the Emperor and the Sayyid Brothers.

Thus strengthened, the Sayyid Brothers deposed (February, 1719), blinded and later strangled Farrukh Siyar and raised to the throne in rapid succession four princes, including Muhammad Shah, the last of their puppet Emperors (September, 1719).

After the deposition of Farrukh Siyar, the *amir-ul-umara* was determined to ruin the influence of Nizam-ul-Mulk. Through the intercession of Muhammad Amin Khan, a compromise was, however, effected and the Sayyid Brothers granted him the *subahdari* of Malwa. Still Nizam-ul-Mulk felt that the Sayyid Brothers would crush him at the earliest opportune moment. So, he began to strengthen his resources in order to save himself from the impending calamity. He enlisted troops and collected artillery and munitions of war.

The Sayyid Brothers suspected that Nizam-ul-Mulk was encouraging their enemies and that he was one of those who promoted the rising of Niku Siyar at Agra. Nizam-ul-Mulk received warning by secret letters from his cousin, Muhammad Amin Khan, that the Sayyid Brothers would crush him after they had suppressed Niku Siyar's rebellion. About this time Emperor Muhammad Shah, in collaboration with Muhammad

Amin Khan, formed a conspiracy to overthrow the Sayyid Brothers. The Emperor and his mother wrote secret letters to Nizam-ul-Mulk complaining of the tyranny of the Sayyid Brothers and requesting him to help them in effecting their emancipation.¹ Having suppressed the Niku Siyar rising, the *amir-ul-umara* turned his attention to crush Nizam-ul-Mulk. He, however, sought to justify his action. He accused Nizam-ul-Mulk of a breach of faith and ordered him to dismiss Marhamat Khan and the extra troops he had levied. Nizam-ul-Mulk represented that he could not, in good conscience, remove a distinguished servant like Marhamat Khan and that he had raised fresh troops in order to protect Malwa from the ravages of the Marathas. The *amir-ul-umara* immediately issued a *farman* recalling him from Malwa and offering him the choice of any one of the provinces of Agra, Allahabad, Multan or Burhanpur.

Meanwhile Nizam-ul-Mulk was informed that the *amir-ul-umara* had sent mace-bearers to enforce his return to the capital. He had also sent his *bakhshi*, Dilawar 'Ali Khan, in his pursuit and had taken all steps to bar his way to the south.

In his extremity, Nizam-ul-Mulk formed the bold plan of ousting the *amir-ul-umara* from the viceroyalty of the Deccan. He received a secret assurance of help from the dissatisfied Mughul officers serving under 'Alam 'Ali Khan, the *amir-ul-umara's* nephew and deputy in the Deccan.

In April, 1720, Nizam-ul-Mulk left Malwa, crossed the Narbada and turned to Asirgarh. The fort surrendered without resistance; Burhanpur was also occupied unopposed. Nizam-ul-Mulk behaved gallantly towards the mother and family of Saif-ud-din 'Ali Khan, a step-brother of the *amir-ul-umara*, who were passing through Burhanpur at that time. He refused to accept the

¹ Khafi Khan, II, 851.

valuables they offered and provided an escort to conduct them in safety to the Narbada.¹

Early in June, 1720, Nizam-ul-Mulk met a force under Dilawar 'Ali Khan, which was composed of picked men including a large number of Baraha Sayyids at Khandwa a few miles away from Burhanpur. Nizam-ul-Mulk achieved a decisive victory over them by his superior tactics. A forced march to Burhanpur of a detachment of the victorious troops checked the forces of 'Alam 'Ali Khan which were advancing from the south to join the forces of Dilawar 'Ali Khan. After some futile negotiations and much tedious marching and counter-marching through Berar, Nizam-ul-Mulk and 'Alam 'Ali Khan fought on August 10, 1720, a fierce battle in a village near Balapur, in which 'Alam 'Ali Khan was killed and his army was dispersed.² This victory ousted the *amir-ul-umara* from the viceroyalty and established the undisputed supremacy of Nizam-ul-Mulk at Aurangabad.

This news distressed the Sayyid Brothers. It was a complete frustration of their designs in the Deccan and a serious set-back to their supremacy in the Empire. They decided that the *amir-ul-umara* and the Emperor should march to Deccan and that Qutb-ul-Mulk should look after their interests in northern India. On their march to the Deccan, the imperial army encamped at Tara in Jaipur State.

Here Muhammad Amin Khan and Sa'adat Khan, who later became the Nawab of Oudh, executed the plot they had formed with the Emperor and his mother, Nawab Qudsiah Begum in order to overthrow the Sayyid regime. They employed Mir Haidar Quli Khan, a Chaghtai Turk in the service of Muhammad Amin Khan, to assassinate the *amir-ul-umara*. On the pretext of submitting a petition, the assassin approached the *amir-ul-umara* and stabbed him to death (October, 1720).³

¹ Khafi Khan, II, 859-60.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 875-885.

³ Khafi Khan, II, 901-905.

Muhammad Shah rewarded the Turanian chief, Muhammad Amin Khan, with the post of chief minister. Qutb-ul-Mulk made a futile attempt to maintain his position by raising Ibrahim, brother of Rafi'-ud-Daulah, to the throne. But he was defeated at Hasanpur on November 13, 1720. He was taken prisoner and was afterwards poisoned. Thus ended the supremacy of the Baraha Sayyids.

Muhammad Shah had previously promised the post of chief minister to Nizam-ul-Mulk, if the Sayyid Brothers were overthrown. So, after the fall of the Sayyids, Nizam-ul-Mulk, expecting the *wizarat* started for the court. But on the way he was informed of the appointment of his cousin, Muhammad Amin Khan, as chief minister. Nizam-ul-Mulk returned to Aurangabad and busied himself in settling affairs of state. In the meantime he received the news of Muhammad Amin's death. He immediately wrote a letter to Sa'd-ud-din Khan, the officer in charge of the imperial household, putting forward his claim to the chief ministership. After a few days he received a *farman* summoning him to court. Nizam-ul-Mulk made the necessary arrangements for the administration of the Deccan in his absence and, leaving 'Iwaz Khan as his deputy, started for Delhi.

Nizam-ul-Mulk reached Delhi on January 29, 1722, to assume charge of the *wizarat*. The jealousy and intrigues of the courtiers, however, delayed for a time his appointment as *wazir*, although it was reserved for him and 'Inayat-ullah Khan Kashmiri performed the duties of the post as an interim arrangement. At last on February 21, 1722, the Emperor presented to Nizam-ul-Mulk in a *darbar* the pen-case symbolic of his appointment as *wazir*.

Nizam-ul-Mulk took the responsibility of his high office seriously, and he wanted to serve sincerely and loyally the cause of the Mughul throne. Trained under

'Alamgir, he had the model of that great Emperor's administration before him, and desired to re-establish the same structure of the Empire, which had contributed to its stability and prosperity for generations. A true disciple of 'Alamgir, a strict disciplinarian and a man free from the prevailing vices and corruption, Nizam-ul-Mulk wanted to restore the imperial dignity, remove the abuses of the court, reform the system of land revenue and to give life and vigour to the administration. He was anxious to maintain the prestige of the throne and rouse the Emperor to a sense of his duty. He did not like the Emperor to while away his time in the company of flatterers and mistresses.

Nizam-ul-Mulk wanted to bring about a fundamental change in the existing system of administration.

In his project for reforms, Nizam-ul-Mulk was stoutly opposed by the favourites of the Emperor. Muhammad Shah could not see his own good and believed whatever he was told, which misinterpreted the reforming zeal of the far-sighted *wazir*. The gay young courtiers of the Emperor openly ridiculed Nizam-ul-Mulk's old fashioned manners and ideas and his austerity and discipline. Nizam-ul-Mulk at first protested in a dignified manner and later, as far as possible, avoided the company of the Emperor. Thus a cleavage was created between the Emperor and his *wazir*.¹

Nizam-ul-Mulk's proposals for a reform in the administration of the revenue alarmed interested courtiers. Muhammad Shah had lavishly made assignments of lands to many of his favourites and nobles. There was no record of many assignments. Nizam-ul-Mulk wanted to bring some order into this chaos, but the Emperor's favourites, led by Haidar Quli Khan, started intrigues to oust him from the *wizarat*. Haidar Quli Khan was, however, obliged to go to his *subahdari* in Gujarat, where he now installed himself virtually as an

¹ Khafi Khan, II, 940.

independent ruler. His presumption increased so much that even the Emperor saw the necessity of suppressing him. As Nizam-ul-Mulk was considered to be the only man capable of suppressing the powerful governor of Gujarat, he was appointed to the *subahdari* of that province in addition to his post of chief minister and the viceroyalty of the Deccan. On his approach, Haidar Quli Khan left Gujarat and came to Delhi by another route (1722). After re-organizing the administration of the *subah* and leaving his uncle Hamid Khan as his deputy, Nizam-ul-Mulk left for the capital. On the way, he obtained the submission of Dost Muhammad Khan of Bhopal and posted 'Azim-ullah Khan, who was Nizam-ul-Mulk's cousin, as his deputy in the *subah* of Malwa.

On his return to Delhi on July, 3, 1723, Nizam-ul-Mulk made repeated efforts to rouse Muhammad Shah to a sense of his duties and to undertake personal supervision of public affairs. He also gave serious advice to the Emperor entreating him to abandon his practice of farming out the *khalisah* lands, to abolish the wholesale corruption prevailing at the court and re-impose the *jiziyah* as in the time of 'Alamgir. He also advised him to requite the services rendered by Shah Tahmasp I of Persia to his ancestor, Humayun, by marching to relieve Tahmasp II, who was then beset by Afghan raiders. But the sound advice of the wise and far-sighted *wazir* fell on deaf ears. The volatile and vicious favourites of the weak and pleasure-loving Emperor poisoned his mind against the faithful and devoted servant of the state. So, in the words of Jadunath Sarkar, "his remonstrances were irksome, and only provoked dislike and jealousy, and in the end, fear and animosity."¹

Nizam-ul-Mulk soon realized that Muhammad Shah was beyond correction and that the mean and jealous favourites of the fickle Emperor would not allow him to execute his beneficent scheme of reform for restoring

¹ J. N. Sarkar—*The Fall of the Mughal Empire*.

the power and prestige of the Mughul Empire. He quietly retired to the Deccan in 1724. Indeed it goes to his credit that he did not deprive the Emperor of his authority in order to rule arbitrarily in his name.

Nizam-ul-Mulk's powerful position as viceroy was not liked by Muhammad Shah, and he began to play the old game of intrigue against him. He superseded him in Malwa and Gujarat, but thereby left these provinces exposed to the incursions of the Marathas, who soon after overran, conquered and annexed them. He also incited Mubariz Khan, Nizam-ul-Mulk's governor at Hyderabad, against the viceroy promising him the government of the Deccan. Nizam-ul-Mulk, however, defeated and killed Mubariz Khan in the Battle of Shakarkhera in Berar on October 11, 1724.¹ This battle was indeed one of the decisive battles of Indian history.

It marked the establishment of Nizam's hereditary rule at Hyderabad. To commemorate his victory, Nizam-ul-Mulk gave Shakarkhera the name of Fathkhera. He then came to Hyderabad on January 16, 1725, and henceforth it became his capital.

Seeing that his designs had completely failed, Muhammad Shah pretended that nothing had happened. He restored Nizam-ul-Mulk his property in Northern India and allowed him to stay in his province as long as he liked and repair to court whenever it suited his convenience. Nizam-ul-Mulk sent supplication to the Emperor, expressing his sentiments of obedience and loyalty. Thereupon the Emperor conferred on him the title of *Asaf Jah*.

Nizam-ul-Mulk had been an inveterate enemy of the Marathas and, if left to himself, he would, like his master 'Alamgir, have fought uncompromisingly to crush their power in the Deccan. But the intrigues

¹ For a detailed discussion of the date of this battle see S. Moinul Haq's article; An Unpublished Letter of Nizam-ul-Mulk addressed to Emperor Muhammad Shah, in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, July 1955, pp. 186-200.

of the Delhi court to oust him from the viceroyalty did not allow him to fulfil his intentions. Besides, it would have been very difficult for him to consolidate his position in the Deccan if he had had to fight simultaneously against the Marathas as well as the court. Moreover, the *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of the Deccan provinces having been granted by the Emperor in 1718, Asaf Jah had to recognize it as a settled fact. Furthermore, by that time the Marathas had become far too strong to be suppressed. So, Sarkar says, "However anti-Maratha in his sentiments as well as his antecedents, Nizam-ul-Mulk was far too wise a statesman to neglect the signs of the times." Hence, before the Battle of Shakarkhera, Nizam-ul-Mulk had come to an understanding with Shahu and obtained his help against Mubariz Khan. After the victory in appreciation of the services of Baji Rao, the viceroy conferred on the Peshwa the rank of 7,000 *zat* and 7,000 *sawar*.

Nizam-ul-Mulk did what was possible in the circumstances to weaken Maratha power and to save his territory from the ruinous occupation and unlimited extortions of a host of greedy Maratha tribute-collectors with their troops. He diplomatically won over Shahu's *senapati* in Gujarat, Trimbak Rao, whom he adroitly played off successively against the imperial *subahdar* of Gujarat and the Peshwa, thereby promoting the rise of Trimbak's lieutenant, the ancestor of Gaekwar. He even expelled the Maratha governor, his forces and tax-collectors from the Carnatic and twice beat the forces of Shahu, which tried to recover the Maratha position in 1726-27. He also won over the Peshwa's rival Shripat Rao Pratinidhi to his side and then purposely affected ignorance of the legal titles of Shahu and Shambhu in the Deccan. Since both professed to be the rightful claimants to *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in the six Deccani *subahs* granted in 1718 by the *amir-ul-umara*, Nizam-ul-Mulk refused to pay the contribution to any in order

not to prejudice the claim of either. In fact, he wanted to confuse the whole issue of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. In the end, he settled that Shahu would himself pay the amount of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in cash from his treasury, so that no Maratha collector need enter his realm. The unauthorised extra taxes, *abwabs* and *rahdari*, were abolished.

But the Peshwa Baji Rao advocated an aggressive and ambitious policy. He was bent on establishing a Maratha empire and, at his instigation, the Marathas raided the territory of Aurangabad. Nizam-ul-Mulk took recourse to diplomacy to counteract Baji Rao's designs. He gave shelter to the discontented Maratha chiefs who left Shahu's court on account of their jealousy to the ascendancy of Baji Rao.

He also planned to weaken the Maratha state by supporting Shambhaji's pretensions to the throne of Shivaji. This gave Baji Rao a pretext to organize a surprise attack on Nizam-ul-Mulk's territory in 1727. 'Iwaz Khan, governor of Berar, however, forced him to flee in the direction of Gujarat. Nizam-ul-Mulk himself invaded the Poona district, occupied Shahu's capital, Poona, and proclaimed Shambhaji's authority over the country. After a series of bewildering rapid marches, Baji Rao returned from Gujarat and advanced towards Aurangabad. This strategy obtained the automatic relief of Poona, because Nizam-ul-Mulk set out to overtake Baji Rao. Avoiding an open engagement, Baji Rao harassed the troops of Nizam-ul-Mulk in various ways and they were manoeuvred into a broken waterless ground near Palkhed, twenty miles west of Daulatabad, and completely hemmed in. After undergoing unspeakable hardship, Nizam-ul-Mulk cut his way out, but, in utter disgust at the worthlessness of his Maratha allies, he gave up his plan of backing Shambhaji and opened negotiations with Baji Rao to conclude an agreement known as the Convention of

Mungi-Shevgaon by which he abandoned Shambhaji's cause and gave up several forts as security for payment of *chauth* (March, 1728). This was indeed a big triumph for Baji Rao.

After the retirement of Nizam-ul-Mulk to the Deccan, Muhammad Shah appointed to the post of chief minister Qamar-ud-din Khan, Raushan-ud-Daulah and Khan Dauran successively. They greatly mismanaged the affairs of the state. Corruption at court reached its climax. Raushan-ud-Daulah himself misappropriated nearly twenty million rupees. The Marathas had greatly increased their power, they had not only overrun Malwa and Gujarat, but also carried their depredations into Rajputana and northern India up to the gates of Delhi. The imperial officers failed to check their incursions. In his extremity, the Emperor sought peace with the Marathas, but the Peshwa Baji Rao demanded a very high price: the cession of the whole of Malwa and the tract south of the Chambal, Allahabad, Banaras, Gaya and Muttra, the recognition of his right as a hereditary *sardeshmukh* and *sardeshpandya* of the six provinces of the Deccan and an annual assignment of five million rupees. To accept such terms was to liquidate the Mughul Empire.

By this time Muhammad Shah was convinced that the only person who could save the Empire from the Marathas was Nizam-ul-Mulk. The Emperor repeatedly wrote to him to forget the past and to come to the rescue of the Empire. He was given the rank of 8,000 *zat* and 8,000 *sawar* and was made the *wakil-i-mutlaq*, the highest office in the Empire. Leaving his second son, Nasir Jang, as his deputy in the viceroyalty of the Deccan Nizam-ul-Mulk set out for Delhi and reached the capital on July 13, 1737. He was warmly received by the people of Delhi, who looked upon him as the saviour of the Empire.

In order that Nizam-ul-Mulk might effectively deal

with the Marathas the Emperor appointed him governor of Malwa superseding Baji Rao and of Agra in place of Jay Singh. The *wazir* then organized a systematic campaign against the Marathas. He planned a three pronged attack against them, which, if carried out faithfully by the imperial commanders, Khan Dauran and Burhan-ul-Mulk Sa'adat 'Ali Khan, might have succeeded in dealing a decisive blow to the Marathas. But the jealousy and treachery of Khan Dauran and Sa'adat 'Ali Khan prevented its success. Khan Dauran, although victorious in an engagement, came to terms with Baji Rao confirming him in the *subahdari* of Malwa. He had also induced Sa'adat 'Ali Khan to refrain from fighting the Marathas. Thus released, Baji Rao harassed Nizam-ul-Mulk's forces in various ways avoiding an open engagement.

Disgusted with the treachery of Khan Dauran and Sa'adat 'Ali Khan, and harassed by the enemy, the tired old veteran signed a convention with Baji Rao at Durai Sarai near Sironj undertaking to obtain for him the whole of Malwa and sovereignty over the territory between the Narbada and Chambal (January 16, 1738).

Nadir Shah's invasion of India in 1739 was a great calamity for the Empire. It is alleged that Nizam-ul-Mulk had secretly urged Nadir Shah to invade India. There is, however, no evidence to substantiate this charge. As a loyal and devoted servant of the Empire, Nizam-ul-Mulk sincerely desired its welfare and strove hard to save it from disintegration and to restore its dignity. Even in extremely trying circumstances his devotion to the Emperor had remained unshaken. His refusal of the offer of the throne of Delhi by Nadir Shah illustrates his loyalty. So, it is unfair to charge a man of his loyalty with faithlessness and treachery. Obviously his opponents, particularly Jay Singh and Samsam-ud-Daulah, who were overshadowed by his dominating personality at court, spread this rumour in order to undermine his position and prestige.

In fact, the explanation of Nadir's invasion is to be sought in the ambition of the great Persian Emperor. This may be well described in the words of Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar: "Nadir sent message after message complaining, with growing urgency and growing imperiousness, of the shelter afforded to his foes (the Afghans) by the Indian government. But his power was underrated; his applications remained unanswered; messengers were detained on futile ground; and at last a party escorting fresh and more imperative emissary was attacked and cut off at Jalalabad."¹

The disaster of Kārnal was the result of Sa'adat Khan's rashness in engaging Nadir Shah's forces at the end of a long march against Nizam-ul-Mulk's advice who had intended to fight a defensive action.

Muhammad Shah negotiated for peace with Nadir Shah through Nizam-ul-Mulk. Nadir Shah agreed to leave India if he was paid twenty million rupees. But Sa'adat 'Ali Khan jealously sabotaged this settlement. He coveted the title of *Amir-ul-Umara* since the death of Khan Dauran. When he learnt that it had been conferred on Nizam-ul-Mulk, he became furious and excited the avarice of Nadir Shah by observing that, in view of the wealth of the Empire, the indemnity agreed upon was too small. This induced Nadir Shah to enter Delhi. Then there followed three days of carnage and plunder in the capital. It was Nizam-ul-Mulk's intercession which saved the inhabitants of Delhi from the wrath of the Persian conqueror. In issuing orders to stop the massacre, Nadir Shah said to Nizam-ul-Mulk, "I am granting this amnesty for thy gray beard."²

After the departure of Nadir Shah, Muhammad Shah wanted to destroy the Turanian ascendancy at court. This introduced quarrels between Nizam-ul-Mulk,

¹ Sarkar, *The fall of the Mughal Empire*, p. 208.

² Dr. Yusuf Husain, *Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I*, p. 232.

and Emperor's new favourite 'Umdat-ul-Mulk, Safdar Jang and others. For the second time he despaired of reforming Muhammad Shah's administration and even of preserving his own honour at the court. He finally left the capital on August 7, 1740. It has rightly been observed of Nizam-ul-Mulk that "he was not the man to agree to a passive sleepy existence like Muhammad Amin Khan, his predecessor, or Muhammad Amin's son, his successor. He set out for the Deccan, determined to make it a stage on which he could at least play a man's part and build up a political structure that would justify his title of Regulator of the Realm."¹

In his absence his son and deputy, Nasir Jang, who had freed himself from the Maratha menace by granting the districts of Khargon and Handiya to the Peshwa, formed the plan of usurping the government of the Deccan. He was, however defeated and captured by his father in a battle near Aurangabad. After this Nizam-ul-Mulk engaged himself for some time in exacting tributes from the dependent chiefs clearing the Carnatic of the Marathas and restoring his authority and peace in that region. He made extensive tours in his territory to suppress disturbances and to establish his dominion on a sound footing.

Nizam-ul-Mulk died on June 1, 1748, at the age of 77 years. For more than half a century Nizam-ul-Mulk served the Mughul Empire in various capacities—as a general, as a *subahdar* and viceroy and as *wazir*. An enterprising soldier and a resourceful army chief, he was undoubtedly the foremost general of his time, who contributed greatly to the expansion of the Empire of 'Alamgir in the south.

In statecraft, diplomacy and in organizing capacity, Nizam-ul-Mulk stood unrivalled in the eighteenth century. As a viceroy of the Deccan, he proved him-

¹ Cambridge History of India, IV, 377.

self a great administrator, and rendered great service to the Mughul Empire, by preventing the Marathas from establishing their rule in the Deccan.

Himself a scholar of Persian and Turki, Nizam-ul-Mulk extended liberal patronage to the learned. Theologians, pious men, scholars and poets from all parts of the subcontinent and the Islamic world received welcome refuge in his court.

CHAPTER IX*

SHAH ABDALI AND THE THIRD BATTLE OF PANIPAT

Of the early history of the Abdalis we have but limited information. The origin of the name is ascribed to one of their ancestors, who is said to have been called 'Abdal' by the well known Shaikh Khwajah Abu Ahmad Abdal Chisti. Saddo being one of their later ancestors, the tribe came to be known as Saddozai.¹ Ahmad's father, Zaman Khan, had migrated to Multan, where Ahmad is stated to have been born.² In the confusion that reigned in Persia before the rise of Nadir Shah, Zaman Khan returned to Herat, where his eldest son, Zu-'l-Fiqar, became the leader of a group of young men. In 1731 Nadir Shah attacked Herat and captured it after a siege of ten months.³ Ahmad and his brother were kept as prisoners in Qandahar, where Nadir Shah had settled the Abdalis and which subsequently became their permanent home. Zu-'l-Fiqar was later made governor of Herat (1737) and the younger brother enlisted in the army as a personal attendant of the Shah. He was soon made a commander of 1000 men.

During the course of Nadir's invasion of Hind-Pakistan Ahmad Shah gave a good account of himself. Nadir Shah was deeply impressed by his bravery and good generalship and appointed him commander of his

*This Chapter deals only with those phases of Ahmad Shah Abdali's career which pertain to the history of the sub-continent.

¹ *Tarikh-i-Ahmad*, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³ Elphinstone, *Caulbul* (Second Edition, 1819), II, 336.

personal contingent of 6000.¹

Nadir was murdered on 9 June 1747 by the Qizilbash conspirators. The latter had planned to overpower the Afghan contingents of the army soon after the murder, but the secret having leaked out, Ahmad manage to forestall the Qizilbash conspiracy. He seized the late monarch's treasures, including the famous *Koh-i-Noor*, and returned to Qandahar, the main stronghold of his kinsmen.² Here they met in council to plan their future action. It was decided to sever connections with Persia and to elect a king from among themselves. A number of meetings were held and the claims of different chiefs were advanced, but ultimately Ahmad was elected. He was crowned in October 1747.³

Soon after the coronation Ahmad Shah started organizing his government. Shah Wali Khan Bamizai was

¹ Nadir is stated to have appreciated his services by remarking that "I have not found in Iran, Turan or Hindustan any man possessed of such praiseworthy qualities as Ahmad Abdali." *Tarikh-i-Ahmad*, p. 5. The historians record an incident which shows how Nadir had become convinced of Abdali's rise to kingship after him. One day, when Nadir was in a good mood, he asked Ahmad who was standing before him to come near him. He did so. The monarch told him to come nearer still; Ahmad obeyed the order and came closer. "O Ahmad!" said the Shah, "Remember that after me the kingship will pass on to you; then you must treat my descendants well." "May I be sacrificed for you," replied the bewildered captain, "if you want to kill me, I am here. It is unnecessary to utter such things." Nadir Shah again said, "I am certain that you will become king after me. You must treat my descendants well and thus fulfil the obligation, you owe to me." History records that not only did Nadir Shah's remarks about Ahmad's rise to kingship come true, but even the wishes of the Persian monarch regarding the treatment of his descendants were fully carried out by the Afghan chief and his successors.

² The author of the *Tarikh-i-Ahmad* says that the news of Nadir's murder was immediately brought to Ahmad Shah by a servant of the murdered king's seraglio. Ahmad kept three to four thousand horsemen ready throughout the night and marched with them early the next morning, defeated the Qizilbash and returned to Qandahar. *Ibid*.

³ Elphinstone, *Cabul*, II, p. 337; G. B. Malleon, *History of Afghanistan*, pp. 274, 275. An interesting story has been recorded by some historians as to how Ahmad's rise to kingship was predicted by a *shaikh*. Shortly before Nadir's murder Ahmad visited Mashhad. When returning from there he found a *darwish*, Sabir Shah trying to spread a piece of cloth on two sticks, as if he wanted to have a tent for children's sport. The *shaikh* inquired, "Are you Ahmad Abdali?" The reply was in the affirmative. "This is Nadir Shah's tent," remarked Sabir Shah, adding that he would become king as soon as it falls down. Ahmad, the story is further related, left there one of his men, who reported to him that it fell at the time of Nadir's murder. Muhammad Sabir is also said to have given his blessings to Ahmad on his assumption of the kingly office and styled him as Durrani Padshah. *Siyar*, II, p. 160. Abdul Karim Kashmiri (*Ibrat-miqal*) and Abdul Karim 'Alawi (*Tarikh-i-Ahmad*) give this story.

made the chief minister with the title of *Ashraf-ul-Wuzara*; Jahan Khan became the *sipahsalar* and Shah Pasand Khan the *Amir-i-Lashkar*. Other appointments were also made by the new king. Fortunately Ahmad Shah's first worry—paucity of funds—was removed without much difficulty. Nadir had sent Taqi Khan Shirazi to bring the revenue from Peshawar. He had come as far as Qandahar when he learnt of the murder of Nadir Shah. Ahmad Shah obtained the treasure from him and took him into his service.¹ Feeling his position to be now fairly secure, the new king struck his own coins.²

In modelling the government Ahmad had Nadir Shah's precedent before him. [The "forms of his court, the great officers of the state, the arrangement of the army," says Elphinstone, "and the pretensions of the crown were exactly the same as those of *Nadir Shauh*..." But here the similarity ended; leaving the forms apart the two systems were basically different. The Persians, whom Nadir had freed from foreign rule, had become used to despotic government. It was, therefore, easy for Nadir to assume the role "of the deliverer of his country, and the restorer of its native kings," and ultimately establish his undisputed authority as a ruler. Ahmad, on the contrary, had to set up his government among a people, who had been for centuries used to tribal organization. It was only through the consensus of the tribal chiefs that he could secure a throne. Supported by their own tribesmen these chiefs

¹ Nasir Khan, the governor of Kabul, had also accompanied him. On his return he came to Peshawar and became an 'originator of trouble' (*masdar-i-shurish*).

² *Tarikh-i-Ahmad*, p. 6. The inscription on his coin was :

حکم شہزاد قادر بی چون باحمد پادشاہ
سکہ زن برسیم وزر از موج ما ہی تابماہ

jealously guarded their freedom and were fully conscious of the fact that the king needed their backing more than they needed his protection. In recognizing this truth lay the greatness of Ahmad Shah. "Far from centralizing all the springs of power in his own hands," Malleson rightly emphasizes, "he resolved to rule the tribes through their chiefs." He would take no important step without first obtaining the consent of his council which was comprised of nine tribal chiefs. The history of his reign covering almost a quarter of a century shows that he had formulated his policy on the right lines.

Within a few months of his coronation at Qandahar, Abdali was called upon to lead his forces into the sub continent and thus began the long series of invasions and conquests which enabled him to lay the foundation of modern Afghanistan on the one hand and to save Muslim power in India from earlier collapse under the growing aggressions of the Marathas and the Sikhs on the other. The immediate cause of his first invasion was an invitation from Shah Nawaz Khan, the Mughul governor of the Panjab. Confusion had prevailed in that province since the death of his capable father, Zakariya Khan, on July 1, 1745.¹ The main cause of the trouble was the difference of opinion between the Emperor and the *wazir*, Qamr-ud-din Khan, on the appointment of Zakariya's successor. The *wazir* recommended the late governor's eldest son Yahya, who was his son-in-law. The Emperor disagreed, because he was against making the office hereditary and wanted to break the ever increasing influence of the Turanis in that region.

¹ July 12 according to the *Siyar*, III, p. 856.

Anand Ram Mukhlis referring to his death says : " There was so much grief for him among all people especially in the city of Lahore, that for three nights in succession no lamp was lighted in any house. Thousands followed his bier through the streets, lamenting aloud, beating their breasts and heaping flowers on his bier, till at last not a handful of flowers was left in the city." (as quoted by Sarkar, I, p. 193).

Qamar-ud-din found a way out of the difficulty by himself taking over the charge of the province and governing it through a deputy, Mu'min Khan. This arrangement, however, proved unwise, because the deputy governor was unable to suppress the forces of disorder. The peace and prosperity which Zakariya Khan's just and strong government had given to the Panjab disappeared. "On one side" says Anand Ram, "the raja of Jammu rebelled and on the other the Sikhs began to cause tumult and trouble." The situation became critical and Muhammad Shah was forced to accept the *wazir's* original recommendation and appoint Yahya as governor. The new governor had to face delicate problems, the most serious being the rivalry of his younger brother, Shah Nawaz. He started by demanding a share of the patrimony but soon grew impatient and resorted to arms. Yahya's men were easily repulsed and he was taken prisoner. Later he escaped and managed to reach Delhi. Shah Nawaz entered Lahore (March 21, 1747), seized the government and strengthened his position by giving all important posts to his own men. He then sent a request to the Emperor that he might be confirmed as deputy governor under the *wazir's* seal. In the meantime Nadir Shah's murder and Adbali's coronation at Qandahar changed the complexion of politics in the north-west. Shah Nawaz, who had appointed Kaura Mal as his chief *diwan* and Adina Beg as the governor of Jullundur, was now advised by the latter to open negotiations with the new ruler of Qandahar. Adina Beg told him that the Emperor would not easily forgive him for overthrowing the governor appointed by him and the *wazir* could not be expected to support his cause against his own son-in-law. He was convinced by this argument and opened negotiations with the Afghan chief. It was agreed that Abdali would be the ruler and Shah Nawaz would serve

him as his minister.¹

Ahmad Shah, who had already established his authority up to Kabul and was now in Peshawar in pursuit of Nasir Khan,² could not have rejected the tempting offer of Shah Nawaz. Nasir Khan after evacuating Peshawar had crossed the river and taken refuge in the land of Chach-Hazara. But he was pursued by the Afghan forces and ultimately had to flee to Lahore. The Afghans also continued their advance in the same direction. Shah Nawaz in the meantime having changed his attitude at the persuasion of the *wazir* put to death Abdali's religious guide, Shah Sabir. The latter had come on a mission of conciliation but unfortunately rumours had spread that he would render Mughul artillery ineffective by his miraculous powers. Whatever the reasons, Sabir Shah's murder exasperated the Afghan ruler. He immediately crossed the Ravi (10 January) and encamped in the Shalamar. On the following morning he forced a battle on the defenders which raged throughout the day without advantage to either party. In the evening when the forces of Shah Nawaz started withdrawing to their trenches under the impression that fighting had ended, the Afghan cavalry made a sudden charge and routed them. The chances of saving the city now being meagre, Shah Nawaz made his escape. The court of ease-loving Muhammad Shah had as usual remained inactive until the invader had marched well into the heart of the Panjab. A delayed decision was taken to check the advance of the Afghans, and it was not before 8 January, 1748, that the *wazir* was given leave to depart. The army had hardly moved 16 miles

¹ *Styar*, II, p. 861.

Nasir Khan was a Baloch. He was the Mughul governor of Kabul at the time of Nadir Shah's invasion and had tried to resist his advance. Nasir was defeated by the Persians but was re-employed in his original office by Nadir Shah. At the time of the latter's murder he was in charge of Kabul. He decided to resist the new ruler although Abdali wanted to retain him in office. Ahmad Shah however, had little difficulty in overpowering Nasir Khan's *gumastah* (*Tarikh-i-Ahmad*, p. 6.)

from the capital, when the news came that Lahore had fallen. This naturally upset the court, but even now the crown prince, Ahmad Shah, who was to hold the supreme command, could not manage to leave earlier than the last day of the month.¹

At Sirhind they came to know that the *faujdar*, 'Ali Muhammad Khan Rohilla, had left for Rohilkhand, with a view to avoiding conflict with his kinsmen. However, it was decided to leave the place in the charge of a small garrison of 1000 horse and foot, and to advance towards the Sutlej. Instead of taking the direct route through Ludhiana they advanced towards the Machchiwara *ghat*, 22 miles to the north. Abdali, taking advantage of this mistake, marched straight on Sirhind and captured it. The prince now decided to turn back, and encamped at Manupur, 10 miles north-west of Sirhind. It was here that the main action was fought on March 11. The *wazir* was accidentally killed by a cannon ball, but the situation was saved by his youthful son, Mu'in-ul-Mulk. Acting on the advice of his dying father he kept the news of his death secret, buried his body and assumed the command, giving out that the *wazir* was ill.²

Another blow for the imperial army was the flight of the Rajput chief, Ishwari Singh. Unable to bear the pressure of the Afghan attack, "the Rajah at once fled

¹ The army is stated to have consisted of 200,000 men in all. But the figure is not free from exaggeration. Among the leading persons who accompanied the prince may be mentioned the *wazir*, Qamar-ud-din Khan, Safdar Jang, Ishwari Singh, the raja of Jaipur and Alha Singh Jat, the *zamindar* of Patiala, Abdullah Khan and Faizullah Khan. The sons of 'Ali Muhammad Khan Rohilla, who had been held as hostages in Delhi, were brought to the camp by Safdar Jang.

² "My son" Qamar-ud-din told Mu'in, "It is all over with me. But the Emperor's work is not yet finished. Before this news spreads do you quickly ride out and deliver the assault. When it is done, you may think of me." (Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, p. 224). The great Urdu poet Sauda is said to have referred to this incident in the following couplet :—

اے دل کسی سے بگڑی کہ آتی ہے فوج اشک
لخت جگر کی لعش کو آگے دھرے ہوئے

away from the field, abandoning his section of the trenches."¹ The youthful commander of the Mughul army, however, remained firm. Safdar Jang also showed great firmness and attacked the section of the enemy facing him. The fate of the battle was decided by an incident which proved unlucky for the Afghans. Some of the carts loaded with rockets, which had been recently captured by them, were mishandled with the result that they flew in the direction of their own forces. The gunpowder store was ignited and many persons were burnt to death. This created panic in the whole army and the soldiers took to flight. Abdali managed to withdraw to Lahore and from there he returned to Qandahar carrying with him as much of his equipment and belongings as he could. The Emperor rewarded Mu'in-ul-Mulk by appointing him the governor of the Panjab.

The position of the new governor, however, was rendered difficult by the machinations of Safdar Jang, who had been made *wazir* in recognition of his services in the war against Shah Abdali. Safdar Jang counted Mu'in among his most formidable rivals for the *wizarat*, because the office had been in his family for more than thirty years. He found a willing tool for his plots against the young governor in Nasir Khan, who had been recently employed by him as a *faujdar*. Nasir was encouraged to raise an army and expel Mu'in, for which he would have been rewarded with the governorship of the province. But the plot ended in failure because Nasir was routed in battle and fled to Delhi. Equally unsuccessful was the second attempt made by the *wazir*. Shah Nawaz, who had accepted the Shi'ah creed, was sent to Multan with instructions to recruit an army and "expel Mu'in by

¹ *Ibid*, p. 228. Abdul Karim says Ishwari Singh had 60 to 70 thousand men under his command. This is obviously an exaggeration. Maulana Azad's figure—12,000 horsemen—seems to be correct. *Vide Khazana-i-Amirah*, p. 98.

force." He collected 15,000 men and gave out that he would go to Lahore to the tomb of his father. Mu'in took immediate action and sent an army under his *bakhshi*, 'Ismat Khan, and his *diwan*, Kaura Mal. They defeated Shah Nawaz and captured Multan which was placed in charge of Kaura Mal.

Soon after the suppression of these plots Mu'in-ul-Mulk was called upon to face the Afghan forces of Shah Abdali. Since his defeat early in the previous year the Afghan ruler had been anxious to retrieve his honour and regain the possession of territories which had been ceded to Nadir Shah by the government of Delhi. The internal condition of the Mughul Empire was steadily deteriorating and Abdali had no reason to postpone a visit to the sub continent, if he really wanted his schemes to materialize. Accordingly he left Qandahar in the autumn of 1749, crossed the Indus in the middle of December and came to Kopra near the Chenab. Although Mu'in-ul-Mulk could not expect any help from Delhi, he decided to offer resistance and arrived near Wazirabad. For several months the scouts and foraging parties fought skirmishing actions with no decisive result. The strain of the continued presence of the two¹ armies proving ruinous to the province, Mu'in-ul-Mulk was forced to forward Shah Abdali's demand for the revenues of *Chahar Mahal* to Delhi. The Emperor immediately accepted and peace was concluded.¹

The tribute promised for *Chahar Mahal* was not paid in time. Even if the provincial government at Lahore had wished to do so, they would have found it difficult to pay the stipulated sum, because Sikh lawlessness and the incompetence of the officers had made it impossible for Mu'in-ul-Mulk to collect the entire revenue. Another factor responsible for his financial difficulties was his

¹ The *Chahar Mahals* were Sialkot, Pasrur, Gujrat and Aurangabad. They had been ceded to Nadir Shah by Muhammad Shah. Mu'in-ul-Mulk now promised to pay a sum of 14 lakhs of rupees as the surplus revenues of the *Mahals* (*Khazana-i-Amirah*, p. 98).

lavish style of living: he never refused anything to his friends. Lastly, the maintenance of peace necessitated constant campaigning which meant abnormal expenditure. In reply therefore to Abdali's demand for 24 lakhs of rupees for the revenue of the past three years, he sent an explanation saying that Nasir Khan, who had held the charge of the ceded territory for the first two years, had run away with all the money that had been collected, and that he was responsible for one year only. Abdali refused to accept this and came to the Panjab for the third time (1751). When he arrived at the banks of the Indus, Mu'in sent him the sum of nine lakhs of rupees. The Shah took the money but continued the march. Mu'in had no option but to offer resistance. He made hurried preparations, crossed the Ravi and encamped near the bridge of Shah Daulah about 22 miles north of Lahore. The Afghan king took a bold step. Leaving his camp standing in front of the enemy position he made a wide detour to the right and suddenly arrived in the environs of Lahore. Mu'in was thus forced to hasten back to his capital. He dislodged the vanguard of the Afghan army which had occupied the Faiz Bakhsh garden, and thus forced them to move towards the Shalamar. Then crossing the river he formed an entrenchment outside the city. For some time the two armies avoided forcing a decisive issue: Abdali had not enough artillery to risk an assault, while Mu'in was not sure of success in an open battle. In the absence of any help from the centre and continuous deterioration in the position of supplies, particularly water and fodder, Mu'in-ul-Mulk decided to shift his camp. The news of this decision leaked out and the mobile cavalry of the Afghans was able to attack the slow-moving multitude of soldiers and camp followers (5 March 1752). The Lahore army, not prepared for this unexpected attack, fell into confusion and despite the bravery and determination of its leader it lost ground. Only

the darkness of the night saved it from total destruction. For the city of Lahore it was a dreadful night, nobody knowing what to do or where to go. Mu'in was thus obliged to beg for peace. The Shah invited him to settle the terms and had an interesting conversation with him.

"What treatment would you have given me," asked the Shah, "if I had fallen into your hands?" Mu'in fearlessly replied, "I would have struck off your head and sent it to the Emperor." The Shah said, "Now that you are in my hands, how shall I treat you?" He said, "If you are a shop-keeper, sell me; if you are a butcher, kill me; but if you are a *padshah*, then grant me your grace and pardon." Ahmad Shah was so much pleased with these straightforward replies, that he embraced Mu'in and conferred upon him the title of *Farzand Khan Bahadur Rustam-i-Hind*.¹ The latter requested the Shah to extend his favour to the people of Lahore also. This was done and orders were issued that the *nasaqchis* should go to the city and stop the soldiers from maltreating the people. According to the terms of the treaty, Lahore and Multan were ceded to Shah Abdali. The latter re-appointed Mu'in-ul-Mulk as governor of the two provinces and made no change in the administrative set-up. The surplus revenue was to be sent to the king and on matters of supreme importance his approval was to be obtained. The treaty was sent to Delhi and ratified by the Emperor. To save the face of the Emperor, however, it was agreed that the letters of appointment of the governors, selected by Abdali, would be issued by the court of Delhi.²

While awaiting the return of his envoy from Delhi the Shah sent an expedition to conquer Kashmir. It was easily taken and placed in the charge of Sukh Jiwan Mal. Having thus obtained possession of the vast

¹ *Tarikh-i-Ahmad*, p. 8. The dialogue is reproduced by other writers also.

² *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, p. 434.

regions of the Panjab and Kashmir the Shah returned to his seat of government.

The change of sovereignty had made the position of the governor of the Panjab more difficult. The defeat and humiliation of the provincial authorities encouraged the forces of disruption and lowered the prestige of the government. Hardly had Abdali left the soil of the sub continent, when the Sikhs resumed their raids and Mu'in was called upon to send punitive expeditions against them. Towards the close of 1752 he had to lead one such expedition in person. But before he could succeed in restoring complete order in the province, he died on November 2, 1753.¹ His widow, popularly known as Mughlani Begum, seized authority and won over the army by paying the arrears of the salaries of the officers and soldiers.

The news of his death reached Delhi on 12 November and on the following day the Emperor appointed his three years old son, Mahmud Khan, as governor and Muhammad Amin, the two years old son of Mu'in, as deputy governor. The actual administration was placed in the charge of Mu'min Khan. Mughlani Begum did not accept the new arrangements and obtained orders from Shah Abdali for the appointment of Muhammad Amin as governor and Mu'min Khan as his deputy in January 1754. Muhammad Amin, however, died soon after his appointment. The affairs of the government had now fallen into a state of confusion, and the ambitious *wazir* 'Imad-ul-Mulk thought it was time to make an attempt to recover the Panjab for the Empire. He had already received an appeal from Mughlani

¹ He is stated to have gone out hunting early in the morning. After a heavy midday meal he had a short siesta ; in the afternoon he was taken ill. No treatment proved effective and he expired the same night. (*Tarikh-i-Ahmad*, p. 9). It has also been suggested that he was poisoned. According to some authorities he had an attack of cholera. He was buried near Shahidganj. In the time of Sher Singh "the Sikhs dismantled the building, dug out the remains of Mir Mannu and scattered them to the winds." (*Lahore Gazetteer*, p. 28n).

Begum to come to her help against Khwajah 'Abdullah who had snatched power from her and kept her in virtual confinement. 'Imad left for the Panjab at the end of 1755, reaching Sirhind early in February of the following year. From here he sent an army to Lahore. Khwajah 'Abdullah slipped away soon after its arrival, and Mughlani Begum came out of her confinement. But she was not destined to enjoy her freedom for long. 'Imad thought that she had brought disgrace to her family and therefore took steps to deprive her of power. She was taken to his camp at Machchiwara and the government of the province was entrusted to Adina Beg, who had not only helped him with troops but also offered a sum of thirty lakhs. When Abdali came to know of these developments in the Panjab, he immediately decided to invade the province. As a preliminary step an Afghan force was sent under Jangbaz Khan. It reached Lahore on 4 October, 1756, and reinstalled Khwajah 'Abdullah who had gone to Qandahar and secured the patronage of the Shah. An envoy had also been sent to Delhi to demand satisfaction for 'Imad's high-handedness in the Panjab. Without waiting for a reply, however, the Shah himself left Qandahar at the head of his main army, reaching Peshawar in the middle of November. He reached Lahore on December 20 and continuing his march eastwards crossed the Sutlej and arrived near Delhi in January 1757.

The news of the loss of Lahore and uninterrupted advance of the Afghan forces in the direction of the capital unnerved the Imperial Government. 'Imad, unable to resist the invaders, himself started negotiations

¹ *Khazanah-i-'Amirah*, p. 52.

According to 'Aliuddin the Shah had received a letter from Mughlani Begum saying : "In Shahjahanabad goods and cash worth karores of rupees lie buried to my knowledge in the palace of my (late) father-in-law.....A perfect disagreement exists between the Emperor Alamgir II, his Amirs and nobles. If your Majesty invades Punjab and India, this will fall into your hands without any obstruction." (*Ibrat Namah*, f. 114 b, as quoted by M. Baqir in *Lahore, Past and Present*, p. 185).

for alliance. He tried Najib-ud-Daulah¹ and Suraj Mal, but with no result. Every day the situation grew more threatening. There was now no doubt left in any mind as to the Afghan ruler's intention of marching on Delhi. An attempt was made to placate the Shah, first by a present of two lakhs in cash and later through a deputation consisting of a relative of the Afghan *wazir* and a holy man, named Shah Fana. However, the Afghans continued their advance. The city became panicky and the richer citizens began to migrate to Agra and Mathura. The *wazir's* family was also sent to Rajputana. It was at this time that the Shah's reply came. He demanded two crores in cash, the cession of the territory west of Sirhind and the hand of the Emperor's daughter.

Abdali, whose position had become very strong since Najib's arrival in his camp, now asked the Emperor and his *wazir* to come to him in person. 'Imad immediately met this demand. He was received by the Shah with kindness, but was asked to pay a crore of

¹ Najib-ud-Daulah, as a far-sighted statesman, had begun to realize that it was in the interest of the Empire that 'Imad should be deprived of power. He had, therefore, decided to support Ahmad Shah Abdali. When asked by the *wazir* to swear on oath allegiance to his cause, he "procrastinated and did not take the oath." When the Shah arrived near the capital, Najib wrote to him, "I have a body of forty thousand Afghan with me in the city, while another body of forty thousand Afghan is ready on the other side of the Ganges to serve you. You may come without any hesitation." (*Sarguzasht*, p. 11).

It is difficult to agree with J. N. Sarkar's view that of the two leading figures, Najib-ud-Daulah and 'Imad-ul-Mulk, "if one was a double dyed traitor, the other was an arrant coward; both were extremely selfish and incapable of patriotism, because India was not their patria." (*Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 1934, p. 92).

In fact 'Imad did his best to form an alliance against the invaders, but to quote Sarkar's own words, Suraj Mal "had rightly argued that the best defence of the empire was for the *wazir* to take a personal lead in the war, combine the Ruhelas, Jats, Rajputs and the old Mughal nobility in the anti-Maratha Campaign, confine the Deccan spoilers to the south of the Narbada and after this ensuring the safety of their homes, lead their united forces into the Punjab for expelling the Afghan invader, as had been done in 1748." (*Ibid.*, p. 84). Thus it is evident that 'Imad had made his position impossible by his alliance with the Marathas. We can attribute this pro-Maratha policy to the lack of diplomatic skill rather than of patriotism. He loved the land but had chosen the wrong horse to ride. The Marathas were no friends either of the Empire or of peace and prosperity.

Similarly Najib-ud-Daulah, like Suraj Mal, believed that nothing was more ruinous to the cause of the government than Marathas brigandage. To protect the life and property of the people from their constant raids he thought he should offer his services and cooperation to the Abdali.

rupees if he wanted to retain his office. 'Imad frankly admitted his inability to collect the amount and resigned the *wizarat* on the spot. Abdali appointed Intizam-ud-Daulah to the office of the *wazir*, keeping 'Imad as a captive. It was now evident that Delhi would not offer resistance : Abdali therefore sent his *nasaqchis* to proclaim that none should molest the poor. A day later the *imams* of the Delhi mosques recited in the Friday *khutbah* the name of Shah Abdali. The Emperor vacated the royal chambers and preparations were begun for the reception of the Shah, but he sent a message on the 26th, saying "I bestow the empire of Hindustan on you. Visit me tomorrow in full royal state." He was received and feasted by the Shah and allowed to return the same evening. Two days later Abdali entered the city, the Emperor having come as far as the Fath-puri Mosque to receive the visitor. On the following morning the two sovereigns held a joint *darbar*. Abdali's exaggerated notions of Delhi's wealth had been intensified by the false statements of interested persons, such as Intizam-ud-Daulah and Mughlani Begum.¹ The Shah, however, was anxious to make the collections in a peaceful and organized manner, but there is evidence to show that violence was used in some places. For instance, strict measures had to be taken against Intizam's servants and threats had to be administered to him and to his mother before the secret depository was shown. It yielded 16 lakhs in coin besides gold, silver and gem-studded vessels. As far as the rich citizens were concerned, the Shah appointed *nasaqchis* with the consultation of the Emperor. It took the Shah about a fortnight (4 to 20 February) to collect the money. The collections were sent to Qandahar in the charge of Prince Timur, who had been married a few days

¹ Intizam had offered two *krors* ; Mughlani Begum had promised to give information about buried treasures of various families.

earlier to the Emperor's daughter, Zahra Begum.¹ With the approval of the Emperor, the Shah himself married Hazrat Begum, daughter of Muhammad Shah.²

Abdali now made some changes in the administrative set up of the Empire: Prince Ali 'Guhar was made *wazir*, while 'Imad was entitled *wakil-i-mutlaq*, but with no powers. The charge of the army was given to Najib, who became the *mir bakhshi*. Later 'Imad was restored to the *wizarat* for showing great courage in the course of the Jat campaign.

The Afghans for some time had been fighting petty actions with a Maratha contingent under Antaji Manakeshwar outside the capital. The latter had been invited by the *wazir* and employed to prevent the flight of the citizens of Delhi. But taking advantage of the panic prevailing in the city "he had pursued the congenial game of robbing the helpless people running about in confusion."³

Later he was sent to gather news about the invading army of the Afghans. On January 16, 1757, the Afghan skirmishers contacted him and pushed him back. He fled towards Faridabad and it was near this town that Jahan Khan, who had been sent to stop him from indulging in highway robbery, attacked his forces on 1 February. The Marathas offered stiff resistance but were thoroughly worsted and suffered heavy losses in a battle which lasted nearly four hours. Antaji, however, managed to escape, reaching his camp at Mathura on February 4. He remained in its neighbourhood for another two months, but always kept himself at a distance of 40 to 50 miles from Delhi, never risking a battle with the Afghans.

Suraj Mal had offered submission to Abdali on his arrival in Delhi, promising to help other chiefs in the

¹ Maulana Azad's statement that Timur was married to the daughter of 'Alamgir II's brother is wrong. See *Khazanah-i-Amirah*, p. 99.

² Abdul Karim's words are :—

سر دفتر خواتین حرم فرمود

³ J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, p. 110.

collection of tribute. But the Afghan victor wanted the Jat chief not only to pay tribute but to attend his court in person and serve under his banner. Suraj Mal would not accept these terms ; He, however, followed a cautious policy, avoiding any step that could possibly offend the Shah. He plainly told Antaji that "the Irani Padshah at the head of 50000 troops has captured the Padshah of Hind, and no one has died in resisting him. What then can I do ?"¹ Abdali, however, was too shrewd to be deceived by these dilatory tactics of the Jat *zamindar*. He left Delhi on 22 February and besieged Ballabgarh which was defended by Suraj Mal's son, Jawahir Singh. The Afghan pressed the siege so hard that Jawahir slipped out of the fort on the night of 3 March, leaving the garrison to be put to the sword by the victors. About a week earlier Sardar Jahan Khan and Najib had been sent with an army of 20,000 men to capture the Jat strongholds right up to Agra and punish the Jats for their atrocities by plundering the territory. The Jats had to defend themselves without any help from the Marathas, who "after sucking the Delhi-Agra region and the Doab on the other bank dry for three years, had fled away. Not a single Maratha bled in defence of the holiest of Vaishnav shrines ; their pan-Indian suzerainty (*Hindu-pad-padshahi*) did not involve the duty to protect."² A few miles north of Mathura Jawahir offered resistance ; but the Jats could not withstand the onslaught of the Afghans : thousands of them were slain and only a small remnant of the army could manage to escape. The defeat of the Jat army was followed by the sack of Mathura, which was subjected to a contribution of one lakh of rupees. Other places such as Brindaban were also attacked and overpowered. The Shah having now arrived at the scene, Jahan Khan was called and

¹ *Selections from the Peshawar's Daftar* (quoted by Sarkar, II, 115).

² Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, 118.

ordered to march on Agra. A deputation of the leading men met him outside the city and a settlement was made on rupees five lakhs. The payment being delayed, the Afghans wanted to enter the city, but could not do so because Mirza Saif-ullah, the son of the imperial *qil'adar* started firing at them from behind the walls of Akbar's fort. However, the sudden outbreak of cholera in their camp forced the Afghans to wind up the campaign and return to their homes.

On his way back Abdali stayed outside Delhi for three days (March 31 to April 2) and met the Emperor. He was asked to restore 'Imad to the office of *wazir* and Najib was appointed *amir-ul-umara*. Before leaving the sub continent he annexed Sirhind, placing it in the charge of 'Abdus-Samad Khan and appointed his son, Prince Timur, as governor of the Panjab. Jahan Khan was to act as the deputy of the new governor.¹

Abdali, anxious to restore the authority of the Emperor and to relieve him of the recalcitrant governors and chiefs, had accepted 'Imad's suggestions and placed the two eastern provinces, Bengal and Oudh, in the charge of two princes of the imperial family namely, Emperor's son, Hidayat Bakhsh, and his nephew, Mirza Babur. They met the Shah in his camp near Mathura and were given instructions to march into the Doab. Here Ahmad Khan Bangash was to meet them and then the joint forces were to advance further east with the object of ousting Shuja' from Oudh. 'Imad accompanied them as chief adviser, and Jangbaz Khan was to act as the commander of a small contingent of Afghan soldiers. The prince stayed for some time at Farrukhabad to recruit additional troops. When Shuja' learnt

¹ Some of the contemporary Muslim writers have given exaggerated accounts of the suffering of the people in the Jat country as a result of the Afghan campaign. There can be no doubt that contributions were levied on various towns and villages and violence was used in some cases; but the "pillage" and "massacres" so frequently mentioned by them were in no way comparable to the systematic raiding of this and other parts of the sub continent by the Marathas. Abdali was not cruel by nature and permitted the use of violence only when it became imperative. Grant Duff is wrong in putting Abdali's return "early in the year 1756." (*A History of the Marathas*, Calcutta edition, 1912, II, 130-31).

of the movement of this army, he left his capital and encamped near the village of Sandi. The Rohilla chiefs also arrived. Hafiz Rahmat Khan had been asked by the Shah to support 'Imad, while Sa'd-ullah Khan wanted to help Shuja', being his personal friend. Both the chiefs, therefore, wanted to bring about conciliation. After a course of tripartite negotiations it was agreed that Shuja' would pay Rs. 15 lakhs as tribute. Out of this 5 lakhs were to be paid immediately and the balance after a year. Thus without achieving anything substantial the princes had to return to Delhi, reaching there about the end of July.

Soon after his appointment to the office of the *bakhshi*, 'Imad had followed the foolish policy of inviting the Marathas to join him against Safdar Jang. It was with their help that he had deposed and blinded the Emperor, Ahmad Shah, and placed 'Alamgir II on the throne. He had purchased this alliance for a very heavy price—82½ lakhs of rupees. The *wazir* had to levy contributions on the citizens of Delhi to procure money, besides ceding part of the Khalsah territories. Having thus "bled the empire white with their insatiable demands"¹ and created conditions of general anarchy the Marathas left the capital and retired to Rajputana.

In 1775 the bulk of the Maratha forces returned to the south. About the end of the following year, however, Malhar Rao, and a few weeks later Raghunath were again sent to the north. The triumphs of the previous years had greatly widened the scope of Maratha ambitions, and Raghunath, who had reached Indore in February 1757, had begun to entertain ideas of marching on Delhi itself. But on hearing the reports of Abdali's conquests, he abandoned this scheme and turned to Rajputana,² where he stayed as long as Ahmad

¹ C. H. I., IV, p. 415.

² The expedition to the north had been sent with the object of collecting money for Poona ; but instead of remitting anything Raghunath was demanding funds from the government, because, "I am feeding myself only by looting villages. In this country most places are fortified, and not a grain of food can be obtained without fighting." Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, 190.

Shah was in the sub continent. He was mortally afraid of coming into conflict with the Afghan king. In a letter dated February 16, he writes: "Our troops are not yet assembled. I have no money. Abdali is strong; it requires very great resources to chastise him. Send Dattaji Sindhia quickly to me from the Deccan."¹ As soon as the Afghans left the region round Delhi, the Marathas returned and began to raid the countryside. Their main target was the Doab, particularly the strongholds of the Rohilla and Bangash chiefs. Saharanpur, Meerut, Sikandarabad and a number of other places were seized and their officers expelled. 'Imad, incapable of learning a lesson from the occurrences of the past few years, once again followed the treacherous policy of securing Maratha help against the Emperor and Najib Khan. Raja Nagar Mal, who had been raised to the position of *naib-wazir* was sent to Anupshahr to court the Marathas.² The allies attacked Delhi and overpowered Najib and his followers by sheer numerical superiority. He was forced to resign his office and retire to his *jagir*, leaving the Emperor and his capital in the hands of 'Imad who was now a mere puppet of the Marathas (September 1757).

The capture of Delhi was followed by a systematic raiding of the surrounding regions for a period of four months. About the end of the year Malhar Rao crossed the Jumna, besieged Kunjpura and seized five lakhs of rupees (January 1758). In March the main army of the Marathas led by Raghunath entered the Panjab and attacked Sirhind. Its commander Abdus-Samad put up a brave resistance but was at last overwhelmed by superior numbers and captured. "The Marathas and Sikhs so thoroughly looted Sirhind city that none of its inhabitants, high or low, male or

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

² *Zikr-i-Mir*, Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu edition, p. 77.

female, had a cloth left on his person. Pulling his house down, they carried off the timber and dug the floors up for buried money.”¹ The Maratha hordes now advanced on Lahore. Prince Timur and Jahan Khan decided to evacuate the city and retire towards Kabul. They took along with them as much of their belongings as they could carry. Jahan Khan resisted an attack by a Maratha contingent at Sarai Kachchi, about 36 miles from Lahore.² The Afghans saved themselves from a crushing defeat by managing to escape in the night. Jahan Khan crossed the Chenab near Wazirabad and took the road to Peshawar. The Marathas were afraid to carry the war beyond the Chenab, because the country was populated largely by the supporters of the Afghan cause and, as Sarkar says, “the assertion that the Maratha standards were carried up to the Indus at Attock is an ignorant boast.”³ Entrusting the administration of the Panjab to Adina Beg on his promising to pay an annual tribute of seventy-five lakhs of rupees the Maratha chiefs returned to Delhi. Adina, however, was not destined to enjoy the fruits of his treachery for long; he died on 15 September. His son-in-law, Khwajah Mirza, whom he had left as his deputy in Lahore could not control the situation and it appeared that the province would soon be in the grip of anarchy. The Peshwa sent a strong army under Dattaji Sindhia who reached the bank of the Sutlej in April 1759. After restoring Maratha supremacy in the Panjab and leaving Sabaji in charge of its government

1 Miskin and *Tarikh 'Alamgir sani*, as quoted by Sarkar, II, 73.

2 The *Tarikh-i-Ahmad* says the site of the action was ‘*Chahar Mahal*’, p. 10.

3 *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, 76 (note). The well-known historian of the Marathas, Grant Duff, says, “.....and Raghunath.....met and totally defeated the Abdalee's governor of Sarhind, speedily overran the country and entered Lahore as a conqueror in the month of May 1758. He appointed Adina Beg Sur-Soobehdar of Mooltan and Lahore, and left Shabjee, a relation of Sindhia's to support him with a body of Maratha troops. Raghunath Rao then returned towards Poona” (*History of the Marathas*, 1912 edition, II, 132). See also *C.H.I.*, IV, 416 and *Khazanah-i-Amirah*, p. 101.

Dattaji returned to Delhi with the object of crushing Najib-ud-Daulah.

The Marathas would never have risked a war with Shah Abdali's men in the Panjab but for the repeated invitations of Adina Beg¹ and active encouragement from 'Imad-ul-Mulk. Adina Beg having fallen out with the Afghan chief, Jahan Khan, had made an alliance with the Sikhs and allowed them to plunder Jullundur and disturb the peace of the province.² "The Sikhs" says a Maratha despatch, "gathering together by our advice began to upset Abdali's rule; from some places they expelled his outposts."³ Thus it was as a result of the Maratha-Sikh alliance brought about by the treacherous move of Adina Beg and supported by the *wazir* that the province of the Panjab passed under the domination of the Marathas. Maratha power had now reached its climax. The dreams of *Hindu-pad-padshahi*, they thought, would soon be realized and the period of Muslim supremacy would come to an end. The Emperor and his court were completely at their mercy, and throughout the sub continent there was not a single Muslim potentate who could successfully resist their aggressions. The destruction of Najib, who was the only stumbling block in their way, appeared to be a matter of a few months, and his fall would clear the field for their unquestioned supremacy. But the Maratha statesmen had grossly miscalculated the situation: they had entirely neglected the dangerous repercussions of expelling Shah Abdali's agents from the Panjab, which was now a regular province

¹. He had started negotiations with Raghunath when the latter was encamped near Delhi, promising them to pay a lakh of rupees for every day of marching and half the amount for halting.

². Referring to the sack of Jullundur, H. R. Gupta says, "Here they gave loose rein to their passions of revenge, indulging in the general plunder and massacre of their enemies. Children were put to the sword, women were dragged out and forcibly converted to Sikhism.....The mosques of the town were defiled by pigs' blood." (*Studies in Later Mughal History of the Punjab*, p. 90).

³ Quoted by J. N. Sarkar, II, 609.

of his kingdom. Nor had they ever considered for a moment that they had completely alienated the sympathies of the people by their policy of loot.

The Maratha policy of bringing Delhi and the Panjab under their control precipitated a clash between the forces of Islam and Hinduism for supremacy in the sub continent. The struggle had been going on for almost the last two centuries, and a final and decisive combat was inevitable; but there can be no doubt that Maratha statesmanship could have postponed, if not averted, it by following a cautious policy which would certainly have been to their advantage. Since the time of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi efforts were being made by Muslim thinkers and leaders to make their co-religionists Islam conscious. They were constantly being instructed not only to fashion their lives according to the teachings of Islam but also to ensure the preservation of its political power. 'Alamgir was the most illustrious champion of this cause and struggled for it with remarkable ability. After him power passed into the hands of persons who lacked statesmanship and were incapable of understanding the real issues. However Shah Waliullah took upon himself the responsibility of educating Muslim opinion. His efforts did not go entirely unrewarded. The Rohilla Afghans, under Najib-ud-Daulah, were now convinced of the necessity of putting fresh vigour into the machinery of government and suppressing the forces of disruption. The Marathas, the Jats and the Sikhs all had proved to be dangerous rivals; but now they had combined under Maratha leadership; besides, the *wazir* and several Muslim chiefs had become their tools. The situation had become so threatening that it would have been suicidal not to face it immediately. Shah Waliullah made a fervent appeal to Abdali to come to the sub continent and to help the Muslims in regaining their

freedom from the domination of their enemies.¹ He also prepared Najib to work for the cause in the sub continent. The latter sent repeated messages to the Shah. In one of these he said, "In the hope of getting your help I have fallen into the hands of Maratha infidels So long as I am alive, I will not hesitate from risking my life and killing the infidels."² Again he appeals to him, "You are the Emperor of Muslims. It is your duty to remedy this affair."³ The Emperor also wrote to him, "Imadul Mulk is thinking of killing me. If your Majesty come this side, I may be saved from the hands of this tyrant, otherwise there is no possibility of safety either for me or for my sons." Even the Hindu rajas are stated to have appealed to him to deliver them from the Maratha and Sikh raiders.⁴ To all these appeals was added the force of the distressing report of his son's expulsion from the Panjab. He could not therefore postpone his visit for long, although he was engaged in suppressing the revolt of the Baluch chief, Nasir Khan. He readily granted him peace on the condition that he would acknowledge his suzerainty and returned to Qandahar to prepare

¹ In a long letter he has discussed the causes of the decline of the Muslims in the sub continent and then said :—

ما بندگان الهی رسول خدا را صلی الله علیه وسلم شفیع می آریم و بنام
خدائی عز و جل سوال می نمائیم که همت با نهمت را بجانب جهاد
کفار این لواحق مصروف فرمایند تا در پیش خدائی عز و جل ثواب جمیل
در نامه اعمال آن حضرت ثبت شود و در دیوان مجاهدین فی سبیل الله
نام نامی نوشته شود و در دنیا غنائم بی حساب بدست غازیان اسلام
افتد و مسلمانان از دست کفار نجات یابند (S. M., p. 52)

² *Sarguzashi*, p. 24.

³ H. R. Gupta on the authority of Nur-ud-din., *Studies*, p. 177.

⁴ Maulana Azad says :—

راجاهائے هندوستان برائے حفظ ملک خود عرائض بہ شاہ درائی
فرستاده آمدن ہندوستان التماس کرد (Khazanah-i-Amirah, p. 101).

for an expedition into the sub continent. Without losing much time he passed through the Bolan Pass and marched up the Indus, crossing it at Attock. In Wazirabad he joined his lieutenant Nur-ud-din, who had been despatched earlier and, having in the meantime cleared the country of the enemies, was now waiting for further orders.¹ The news of Abdali's arrival in the Panjab upset the Marathas. Sabaji abandoned the province and came to the camp of Dattaji (8 November, 1759). The latter decided to secure allies and messages were sent to Suraj Mal, Ahmad Khan Bangash, Malhar Rao and the *wazir*, to whom he wrote, "In what sleep of negligence are you sunk? I am engaged here in fighting at your request, and you are planning to flee away to Bharatpur." 'Imad left the capital but only after making the necessary arrangements for the murder of 'Alamgir II. The ghastly deed was performed by his agents on the 29 November. The regicides placed upon the vacant throne a grandson of Prince Kam Bakhsh with the title of Shah Jahan and completed the tragedy by strangling Intizam-ud-Daulah.² The reports of these brutal murders incensed Abdali and he expedited his advance on the capital. Dattaji now raised the siege of Shukkartal, and decided to withdraw to Delhi. On crossing the Jumna at Ramra Ghat (near Panipat) he learnt that the Afghan ruler was in the vicinity of Ambala. A clash could not now be avoided and the advance-guards of the two armies met in the historic plain near Taraori. Shah Pasand Khan, who commanded the Afghan contingent inflicted a crushing defeat on the Marathas led by Bhoite (December 24). The same night the Durrani crossed the Jumna into the Doab and the Shah received Najib Khan near Meerut.³ The other Rohilla chiefs Hafiz Rahmat

¹ G. B. Malleson, *History of Afghanistan*, 1878, p. 186.

² He was the son of the late *wazir*, Qamaruddin Khan.

³ *Sarguzasht*, p. 29.

Khan, Dunde Khan, Mulla Sardar Khan and Sa'd-ullah Khan joined him later. Under the guidance of Najib, the Shah marched down the Jumna arriving at Luni, six miles from the capital. Dattaji, who had fallen back upon Delhi, was now encamped at Bararighat about 10 miles from the city. The bed of the Jumna, which now lay between the two armies, had an island covered with a thick overgrowth of *jhau* trees. Taking advantage of this cover Najib managed to cross the river unseen (January, 1760), and was immediately followed by the Durranis. Sabaji tried to resist them but was driven back with heavy slaughter. Soon after Dattaji arrived at the scene and tried to restore the Maratha position by a counter charge. But as he was passing by a *nalah*, the fatal bullet of an Afghan *jazail* struck him in the eye. His death created panic in the Maratha ranks and they fled leaving "their chieftain's body to crows and jackals."¹ His head was cut off by Mian Qutb Shah, who took it as a trophy to the Afghan king. On hearing of this disaster Jankoji rushed to the spot with 2000 men. The Marathas had become so demoralized by the defeat of their vanguard that "they stood in the background.... without venturing to advance to their support." Jankoji, however, pushed them on, but like Dattaji, he too was struck by a bullet and had to be dragged from the field. The Marathas were now thoroughly worsted and those who had escaped slaughter rushed headlong towards the south-west. 'Imad, who had been left to guard the capital, could not dare to stay there any more and fled to Bharatpur.

Jankoji soon managed to join Malhar Rao Holkar, who had already moved from his Rajputana camp on January 3. It was now decided that they would

¹ J. N. Sarkar, *Fail of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 223.

According to Mir Taqi it was left on the bank of the river. He says :

دکھینان دست و پا کم کردہ لاش او را بر داشتند و کنار آب

(Zikr-i-Mir, p. 84). گراشتند

fight the war according to their traditional methods. They would make lightning raids on the enemy's stores and treasures and then march into the Doab to ravage the territories of his allies, the Rohillas. Accordingly after roving about for sometime in the Mewat region, Malhar crossed the Jumna, reaching Sikandarabad on 28 February. He sacked this prosperous town¹ and halted there for a few days in the hope of plundering the collections of Najib which were reported to be on their way to Abdali's camp. The greed for wealth proved disastrous to the Marathas, because Abdali's general, Jahan Khan,² having "dashed over 100 miles in the incredibly short time of 14 hours" overtook them by surprise. They offered resistance but were soon overpowered and slain in large numbers. Malhar, however, succeeded in escaping alive to Agra. Abdali was now advised by Najib to pass the coming summer at Aligarh.³

After his victory over Dattaji, the Shah had written to Suraj Mal and the Hindu princes of Rajputana instructing them to pay him tribute and attend his court. Some of these chiefs in spite of their fear of Maratha retaliation after the return of Abdali are stated to have offered allegiance and sent presents to him through their agents.⁴

The news of the disastrous defeats of the Marathas at the hands of Shah Abdali reached the Peshwa about the middle of February 1760. The reports were too distressing not to have excited him into immediate action. At Patdur⁵ top-level consultations were held and it was decided that a large army should be sent to the north

¹ Lachhmi Narain, *Bisat-ul-Ghanaim*, p. 87.

² Maulana Azad and Lachhmi Narayan say Shah Pasand Khan instead of Jahan Khan. See *Bisat-ul-Ghanaim*, p. 87 ; *Khazanah-i-'Amirah*, p. 102.

³ *Sarguzasht*, pp. 32-33. After the capture of Aligarh the Shah cantoned in Anupshahr during the rainy season. See *Tarikh-i-Ahmad*, p. 12. *C.H.I.*, IV, p. 418.

⁴ *Tarikh-i-Ahmad*, p. 12.

⁵ Patdur—a railway station not far from Jalna.

to vindicate the honour of the Marathas. Raghunath seemed to be the obvious choice for command, but he was rejected because his invasions in the north had not proved lucrative and had involved the government in a huge debt. Sadashiv Rao Bhao was therefore selected as the commander of the expedition, but "lest he should set up an independent principality of his own in Hindustan when enjoying supreme command there without a partner, a brake on him was devised by sending the Peshwa's son Vishwas Rao (a lad of seventeen) with this army as its nominal commander-in-chief....."¹ Leaving the Deccan about the middle of March Maratha army reached Gwalior on May 30. It halted for more than a month on the north bank of the Chambal; and it was here that Malhar Rao joined it and Suraj Mal visited Bhao and offered vast quantities of provisions. In the meantime Bhao had been receiving uncomfortable news: Shuja'-ud-Daulah could not be won, Najibud-Daulah and Jahan Khan had captured some of the Maratha posts in the Doab and threatened others, and lastly Bhao's plans for invading Oudh to punish its ruler for joining the Afghans had failed. In the face of these failures Bhao changed his strategy. He abandoned the original plan of crossing the Jumna into the Doab and meeting Abdali there. He now decided to march on Delhi and capture it, because he knew it had a weak garrison. This would provide him with a secure base for future operations and would also add to the reputation and glory of the Maratha army. Accordingly a strong force led by Malhar Rao and supported by Suraj Mal and the treacherous 'Imad attacked Delhi (on 22 July) which had already recovered from the effects of the extortions of the retreating Marathas six months earlier.² The invaders entered

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, pp. 238-39.

² Even the shrine of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia was plundered on this occasion. *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 250.

the city without much difficulty but could not seize the fort, because its small garrison under Ya'qub 'Ali Khan put up a gallant defence. The Marathas now besieged the fort and subjected it to a heavy bombardment. Ya'qub was compelled to ask for peace. He was allowed to carry with him all his property, leaving the fort in the possession of the Marathas (2 August).¹

Bhao, always vain and proud, became positively arrogant after the capture of Delhi and seems to have lost all sense of proportion. Suraj Mal had advised him not to risk an open battle with the Muslims but stick to the old traditional Maratha way of fighting. Holkar and Sindhia agreed with his views. But Bhao contemptuously rejected this as "the chatter of goat herds and *zamindars*." The remark deeply hurt the generals to whom it referred and Suraj Mal slipped away at the first opportunity. Similarly Shuja'-ud-Daulah's attempt to bring about peace was interpreted by him as a sign of the enemy's weakness. In a letter dated 3 August he wrote to Govind Ballal: "Ahmad Bangash and some Rohillas are going away to their homes. Shuja now realizes what to expect from his having joined Abdali.....My capture of Delhi has broken his waist," and again a few days later, "Yes, my conquest of the capital has struck awe into Abdali and caused a split in his camp. Many Turanis wish to desert his service for ours. His troops are greatly frightened.....Najib alone is keeping up his spirits. Shuja as the result of his joining Abdali, finds himself bogged."² The true

¹ The conduct of the Marathas was offensive. They removed the silver in the ceiling of the *Diwani-i-Khas* and plundered tombs and shrines. It was rumoured that Bhao intended to place Vishwas on the imperial throne. Maulana Azad relying on the authority of letters written to him by a Brahmin pupil, who was in the service of Bhao has given some interesting details of the highhandedness of the Marathas. He names the tombs (*Qadam Sharif*, Muhammad Shah's tomb and that of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia) which were plundered and says that Bhao proclaimed the appointment of Shuja' as *wazir* in order to make him suspicious in the eyes of Abdali. The author of the *Tarikh-i-Ahmad* adds that Bhao intended to convert the *Jami' Masjid* into a temple and plant in it an idol which he had with him. *Khazanah-i-Amjrah*, p. 105; *Tarikh-i-Ahmad*, p. 12.

² Quoted by Sarkar in his *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, pp. 259-60.

state of affairs in Bhao's camp, however, was not as favourable as the above remarks would lead one to think. His funds were running short, because the contributions sent by the Maratha collectors in Hindustan, on which he mainly relied, were far below his calculations. Even the plunder of Delhi and the removal of the silver ceiling of the *Diwan-i-Khas* did not bring him more than a few lakhs of rupees. The tract in the Doab immediately to the east of Delhi being in the hands of Abdali, they could not obtain any food supplies from that side and as early as the middle of September it was reported that "in our army even big men are fasting, the horses have forgotten what it is to eat gram." Under these circumstances he had to move elsewhere. He decided to attack Kunjpura where lay enormous quantities of grain, stored for Abdali's army by his agents. Outside the town were encamped Abdus-Samad Khan, governor of Sirhind and Mian Qutb Shah with about 2000 men. Inside the town there were about 8000 combatants under Najabat Khan. The Maratha hordes fell upon this small band of gallant fighters and overpowered them. Abdus-Samad was killed, Qutb Shah was wounded and many of their followers were slain. The Marathas plundered the town to their heart's content and seized enormous quantities of grain besides horses, camels and guns and goods worth ten lakhs. More than six lakhs of rupees were found in cash. This was in addition to the properties looted from the private houses by the soldiers and camp followers. The heads of Abdus-Samad and Qutb Shah were cut off, placed on lances and paraded in the camp.¹ Bhao stayed at Kunjpura for a week and then began his march westwards. At Taraori he came to know that the Shah having crossed the Jumna at Baghpat had reached

¹ Nur-ud-din gives details of the capture of Kunjpurah. *Sarguzashi*, pp. 35-37.

Sonipat. Bhao immediately turned back and encamped at Panipat (October 29, 1761).

The period of Abdali's stay in the Doab during the rainy season had been utilized for diplomatic and military preparations for the expected clash with the Marathas. Shuja'-ud-Daulah's support was sought by both the parties because he commanded a strong army, and would exercise a decisive influence on the result of the war. Najib himself went to Oudh to meet him and ultimately succeeded in persuading him to join Abdali. This was not an easy task. When he gave the Shah's message to Shuja' the latter showed him a letter from Bhao making a similar request. Then against Najib's argument that it was a conflict between Islam and infidelity, the ruler of Oudh had his genuine doubts if the Durrani monarch had really forgotten his defeat in 1748 at the hands of his father, Safdar Jang. Shuja' was therefore reluctant to join Abdali and thought that the best course for him would be to remain neutral. Najib answered these misgivings by pledging his honour on solemn oaths and said, "Do one of the two things now ; either go to Abdali's side, or here is my dagger and here my neck ; cut it with your hand." Shuja' ultimately accepted his suggestion and gave him an undertaking that on receiving an assurance of safety from the Shah he would join his camp. On July 18 he was received by Abdali and the magniloquent title of *Farzand Khan* was conferred on him. This was Najib's most splendid achievement.

Nevertheless, for nearly ten weeks after the fall of Delhi Abdali had to face terrible difficulties. His funds had begun to run short and the position of his supplies had become precarious. Provisions had to be brought from long distances and involved considerable labour and expense. Najib did his best to relieve the situation, but his resources also proved inadequate. Perhaps more serious was the problem of keeping intact the

morale of the Indo-Pakistani chiefs who had begun to waver in their loyalty to the Shah after the capture of Delhi by the Marathas. But Abdali's determination remained unshaken. The Jumna, which separated him from the imperial capital being in flood, he had not been able to save it from falling into the hands of the enemies ; but the fall of Kunjpura made him almost furious. "It is unbearable now," he said to his sardars, "that while I am still alive, my countrymen, the Afghans should be insulted after this fashion."¹ He made frantic efforts to discover a fordable passage across the river. On being told that all attempts had failed he is stated to have fasted and prayed to God for two days : on the third a ford was found and the army crossed the river with a loss of life that was negligible. The day after the Shah had crossed the river a Maratha patrol, about a thousand strong was surprised by Shah Pasand Khan and cut to a man. On the following day (October 28) the advance guards of the two forces fought an indecisive action near Sarai Sambhalka.² After staying here for three days the Shah resumed his march on the 31st and reached the historic site of the battle on the following day.

About the actual strength of the two armies there are wide differences in figures given by the various authorities. Kashi Raj and Ja'far Shamlu were both present in the battle, but the difference in their figures is staggering. However, there can be no doubt that the Maratha hosts were numerically far superior even if they were not actually more than three and a half lakhs as has been stated by some quite reliable authorities. Perhaps it would be safe to accept Har Sukh Rai's version that "when the news of the total defeat of Datta, Janko and Malhar reached the Deccan, Bala Rao the chief of the Marathas sent his son, Biswas Rao and Bhao,

¹ *Sarguzasht*, p. 37.

² About 12 miles south of Panipat.

who was among his cousins, with famous sardars and soldiers, more than two hundred thousand (comprising horsemen and infantry), for the purpose of taking revenge.”¹

In the beginning Abdali followed a cautious policy, not allowing his men to sally out even to avenge their losses at the hands of the Maratha foragers. This was taken by the Marathas to be a sign of fear and weakness. Bhao wrote as early as November 1, “I have every confidence of being able to swallow him up soon.” The impression had gained ground that the Afghan monarch would be starved out if his supply lines in the Doab were cut and the territories of his Hind-Pakistani allies were threatened by the raiding parties of the Marathas. Govind Ballal was accordingly instructed to harry the upper Doab and threaten the Rohilla outposts. He had come as far as Shahdara and aimed at seizing Meerut which was in Najib’s territory. From here he was to proceed towards the banks of the Jumna and crossing it near Kunjpura² was to reach Panipat and join the main army. The Shah took prompt action to counter this strategy. He “ordered Jarachi Karim Dad Khan and Mir ‘Atai Khan to intercept him and not to let him join Bhao. Accordingly the two *sardars* accompanied by Najib-ud-Daulah’s *jamadar*, Karim Khan crossed the river and in a day and night covered a distance of fifty *kos* from Sikandra to Meerut. At early dawn they fell upon the camp of Govind Pandit, who was totally off his guard, and cut off his head.”³

¹ *Majma-ul-Akhbar* (Mss.) Fol. 458. It is a contemporary work, *Catalogue of Persian Mss.*, III, p. 896, in the British Museum.

Sarkar has taken great pains to show that the fighting strength of the Marathas was numerically inferior to the Muslims. The evidence to the contrary, however, is so overwhelming that his conclusions cannot be accepted. Of the two eye-witness authorities he relies on Kashi Raj and discards Shamlu without adequate reasons.

² *Sarguzasht*, p. 49.

³ The author of *Tarikh-i-Ahmad* says that Govind had “40 to 50 thousand troo,” Atai Khan’s contingent has less than 5000 men. He also adds that about 18000 men were slain by the Afghans. See p. 14.

'Inayat Khan, the youthful son of Hafiz Rahmat Khan was to accompany them with about 500 horsemen, as a guide. Govind was an old man in his seventies and was too heavy to save himself by escaping from the scene.

The report of this reverse came as a blow to the Maratha commander. His main line of supplies was now cut and the scarcity of provisions and the possibility of famine began to unnerve him. Nor had the early clashes between the skirmishers been encouraging for the Marathas. On 19 November Ibrahim Gardi's brother, Fath Khan, had made a night attack on the Muslim camp, but had been expelled with heavy losses. One of the important actions in the early stages of the struggle was the charge of the Rohillas on December 7 and their penetration right up to the Maratha trenches. The Rohillas are stated to have gone as far as the market square of the enemy camp and started singing and dancing "in scorn of the foe." This brought nearly 40 to 50 thousand Maratha soldiers on them including the musketeers of Ibrahim Gardi and several thousand of them were slaughtered and wounded. But the Marathas also suffered an irreparable loss because their leader Balwant was killed by a bullet. "We fought well," said Nana Farnavis, "but owing to Balwant's fall the enemy became triumphant."¹ This battle proved disastrous for the Maratha cause. In Balwant the Maratha commander lost a trusted and wise counsellor. Soon after this came the defeat of Govind Ballal on 17 December and the seizure of a treasure convoy by the Afghans on 6 January 1761. Bhao was completely demoralized by these reverses and the ever-increasing scarcity of the provisions.

The absence of sanitary arrangements had rendered the entire camp dirty to an extent which had now become

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, p. 305.

intolerable. Bhao therefore decided to make one last effort to save himself by begging for peace. He made an appeal to Shuja'-ud-Daulah, giving him a *carte blanche* in respect of the terms of the treaty. Abdali's *wazir* was prepared to grant peace for a large sum. But when the issue was discussed before the king, Najib stoutly opposed the idea of peace. The Shah pointed out that he did not have adequate funds, but he said, "I have girt up my loins for *jihad* in the service of God." Qazi Idris encouraged him to "remain steady in what you have just said, and look to your faith (only). Let not avarice influence your decision in the matter. Otherwise the religious reward of *jihad* would disappear..... Wordly existence is transitory.....Do not fear the enemy, do not fear the lack of funds and fear God alone." The *sardars* applauded the *qazi* and the Shah asked those who were present to recite the *fatihah*. The decision was taken and the agents of the Marathas were dismissed.¹

In Bhao's camp, on the contrary, things were taking a dreary shape. Scarcity was their greatest foe ; it had now made life impossible. On January 13 a crowd of officers and soldiers thronged round the tent of their leader and shouted : "It is now two days that no man among us has got a grain to eat.....Do not let us perish in this misery. Let us make a valiant struggle against the enemy; and then what fate has ordained will happen." It was late at midnight that a decision was taken that the army should march out the following morning for a final battle. Bhao, who had completely lost nerve on account of the successive reverses, tried, even after yielding to the clamour of his soldiers and issuing orders for the battle, to beg for peace. He sent a short note to Shuja'-ud-Daulah's Maratha clerk, Kashi Raj, through his valet, Balak Ram, asking him to appeal to his master for a settlement, because "the cup

¹ *Sarguzasht*, pp. 48-49.

is now full and cannot hold another drop." When the note was being read to the Nawab (about 3 A.M.), his scouts brought the news that the Maratha army was already moving towards the camp of the Shah. Shuja' immediately rode to Abdali's tent, woke him up and told him about the movement of the Maratha army.

Abdali lost not a moment of the precious time. He called the *wazir* and Shah Pasand Khan and ordered them to prepare for the action.

The experienced Afghan monarch had divided his army into three sections. The biggest contingent was in the centre under the command of the *wazir*. To his right and left were the Rohilla *sardars*, Najib and his friends being on the left and the trans-gangetic chiefs, Hafiz Rahmat Khan and Dunde Khan on the right. The extreme wings were again guarded by small Durrani contingents.

The battle commenced with a cannonading by Ibrahim Gardi's battalion. But this did not prove effective because most of the cannon balls fell beyond the Afghan army and Ibrahim was forced to start hand to hand fighting. Before advancing towards the enemy Ibrahim had met Bhao and told him although he had often been displeased by his insistence on immediate payment of the salaries of his men, yet he would find that "I shall discharge my duty." A three-hours grim Gardi-Rohilla duel then followed. In the beginning the Rohillas were slain in large numbers and had begun to show signs of yielding to the enemy's pressure. But Rahmat Khan being ill, Dunde Khan got down from his horse and told his men to realize that "our life and honour are perishing," and thus made them renew their attacks. The Rohillas now wrought havoc in Gardi's battalions and slaughtered them in such large numbers that only about 1500 could manage to escape alive out of the entire force of 8000.

More dreadful and more decisive was the clash of the centres of the two armies. Here the Marathas led by Bhao himself had attacked the *wazir* and started with an artillery charge. But it was not long before firing ceased and the two forces came to grips with one another in a hand to hand combat. The pressure of the Maratha charge broke the Afghan ranks, and they were slain in large numbers. But the *wazir* remained firm in his position like a rock. As soon as the Shah learnt of the perilous condition of his minister he posted some officers behind his ranks to stop his men from running away. He also sent two contingents of his bodyguards—one to reinforce the *wazir* and the other to support the Rohillas. The arrival of these fresh forces turned the tables. Bhao could not fail to see the dreadful result of the battle but now there was no going back, retreat being impossible. It was at this critical stage that Abdali sent three squadrons of his favourite slave corps known as the *Bashguls* to surround the Marathas. "All the three squadrons of the *Bashguls*" says Nur-ud-din, "then started from three different directions at once and subjected the advance troops of Bhao to musket fire. Bhao's forces lost heart. The *Bashguls*, encouraged, cut their way right up to the personal troops of Bhao. An unusual tumult arose and people began to flee.....The troops of the Marathas who had previously spread out in the field of battle, got hemmed in from all sides. Matters came to such a pass that one lakh of Maratha troopers were cordoned off by the slaves who galloped round and round them." It was at this juncture that the handsome young Vishwas was fatally hit by a bullet. Bhao went to see his nephew. The sight of his body dangling from his elephant broke his heart, and "determined to die, he galloped his horse forward with his personal troops who were experienced and tried." Bhao was now fighting a hopeless cause

but death was the only end that he could wish for. He was wounded and had to come down from his horse. As soon as he alighted five soldiers rushed at him and struck off his head. "Thus perished Sadashiv Bhau Rao," laments a modern Hindu historian, "on the grave of his reputation and of the imperialistic dreams of his race."¹

Another scene of fighting was the clash between the right wing of the Maratha army and the Rohillas of Najib. Here Najib adopted a novel method: he dismounted his horsemen and merging them with the infantry continued his advance until he came within firing range. Now he ordered his men to open fire. The Marathas were completely overwhelmed and had no option left but to turn back. Malhar Rao was the first leader to take to flight; the contingent of Sindhia followed suit, leaving their chief, Jankoji, to his fate. He was wounded and driven to the centre. Thus the right wing of the Marathas was completely wiped out by the brave fighters of Najib.

By about 3 P.M. the battle was over and the Marathas who had escaped death were running pell-mell in all directions.² The victorious Muslims started their pursuit of the fugitives, which continued till about three hours after sunset. The number of Maratha casualties was enormous; at least 30000 of them had been slain in the battle. Kashi Raj's statements are rarely free from exaggeration, but his words that "every trooper of the Shah brought away ten, and sometimes twenty camels laden with money," leaves the impression that the booty must have been fairly large and Abdali seems to have received a handsome return for his determination to fight despite the inadequacy of his funds and the numerical inferiority of his forces.

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II. p. 343.

² Lachhmi Narain gives a fairly good account of the end of the various Maratha chiefs. In the course of the fight he tells us "the trench which had been dug for defence became the well of calamity." See *Bisat-ul-Ghanaim*, pp. 98-108.

Of the Maratha leaders, Malhar was the only one who escaped death. The body of Vishwas, who was among the first to be killed, was kept by the Durrani, who wanted to stuff it and carry it to their country as a trophy. But at the suggestion of Shuja'-ud-Daulah it was surrendered to the Brahmins for cremation. Bhao's body and head were separately burnt with religious rites. Jankoji had been captured by Barkhurdar Khan who put him to death secretly lest he might incur the Shah's displeasure because a rumour had begun to spread that the Afghan chief was trying to sell him for a large ransom. Ibrahim had taken refuge with Shuja'-ud-Daulah. But the Durrani soldiers would not spare this Muslim who had fought for the infidels. He was executed.

The disaster of Panipat shook to its very foundations the power of the Marathas and cast into dust the dreams of *Hindu-pad-padshahi*. It is true only a decade later we find their forces escorting the Emperor Shah 'Alam to his capital, and by 1789 Mahadaji Sindhia had become his "*farzand-i-dilband*"; but vital changes had occurred during these three decades. The East India Company had emerged in the meantime as a political entity and established its power in Bengal and the Deccan. The Marathas had followed an unpatriotic policy and by their constant raids and opposition had weakened the Empire beyond repair. Now they had to reap the fruits of their misdeeds. The Empire of Delhi had become too weak to defend the sub continent against any power. Its collapse was inevitable, but such was the irony of fate that those who had played the game of disruption and ingratitude were wiped out before the curtain fell over the tragic scene of 1857.

The glory of Abdali's triumph ends with his brilliant victory on the field of the battle. He could not correctly diagnose the true nature of the disease. The machinery of the Mughul government had become too loose to be geared into action by provisional arrangements or by

a mere change of parts. The Mughul Empire subsisting on the legacy of its past reputation and controlled by selfish courtiers could now easily become a positive source of danger to the cause of Islam in the sub continent. The long and inglorious reign of Shah 'Alam is a sad commentary on the continuous and ever-increasing weakness of Muslim society. Abdali had destroyed the forces of disruption, but it was equally essential for him to have rebuilt the machinery of government under his direct supervision. Unfortunately he did only half the work, and therefore only postponed the catastrophe.¹

In the decade following the Battle of Panipat Abdali came to the sub continent five times but the causes of these invasions were problems of a local nature. The defeat of the Marathas and the degeneration of Mughul rule permitted two lesser powers—the Sikhs and the Jats—to raise their heads. Both created lawlessness in the regions surrounding their neighbourhood, but Abdali was concerned with the Sikhs only because the Panjab where they wrought havoc was part of his kingdom. Soon after his departure in May 1761 the Sikhs began to raid the territories of the Panjab. About 40,000 of them attacked and killed Mirza Khan who was in charge of the *Chahar Mahal*. Then they entered the Jullundur Doab and expelled the Durrani chief. Sirhind was next plundered and because it had received help from Maler Kotla, the raiders turned to that place and laid it waste.² Nur-ud-din, whom Abdali had sent with orders to restore peace in the Panjab, was defeated by Charat Singh (grand father of Ranjit Singh). These victories made the Sikhs so bold that they attacked Lahore, killed the governor Khwajah 'Abid, declared Jassa Singh its king and struck their own coin.³ The

¹ For arrangements made by Abdali after the Battle of Panipat, see Chapter IV.

² Browne, *Tracts*, II, p. 23.

³ *Khazanah-i-Amrah*, p. 114.

town of Jandiala was besieged because its Hindu chief Aqil Dass had helped the Shah. The reports of these occurrences excited Abdali and he marched straight to the scene of the trouble. The Sikhs had in the meantime fled towards Kup, about 22 miles from Ludhiana, and encamped there.¹ They were completely defeated with heavy losses.² Abdali had to stay for some months in the Panjab to suppress the Sikh raiders. He utilized this opportunity for a punitive expedition to Kashmir because its governor Sukh Jiwan Lal had raised the standard of revolt. Sukh Jiwan was defeated and captured and Kashmir was placed in the charge of Nur-ud-din. In December 1762 the Shah returned to Qandahar after appointing Kabuli Mal to the governorship of Lahore.³

As before, the departure of the Durranis again proved to be a signal for the Sikh marauders to come out and resume their lawlessness. The Shah collected an army and wrote to Nasir Khan Baluch who was preparing to make the *hajj*, "I have received news..... that the Sikhs have laid waste the Lahore territory..... They have demobilised mosques, taken Muslims as captives and have prevented the Muslims from performing all the religious observances. Things have grown so bad and you are going on a pilgrimage. A religious war with them is better than a pilgrimage.

¹ The authorities differ as to the strength of the Sikh army. Mawlana Azad says they had two lakhs of soldiers, while other writers including the author of "*Tarikh-i-Ahmad*" gives the number as 70 to 80 thousand. *Khazana-i-Amirah*, p. 114; *Tarikh-i-Ahmad*, p. 16.

² See also Chapter V.

³ The story of Shah Abdali's abrupt decision to invade the Punjab is related by some writers in an interesting manner. He is stated to have got up suddenly from sleep one night, taken his horse and started on his march with 300 guards of the palace. The *wazir* had to send 50 to 60 express *farmans* to the chiefs on the route asking them to join the Shah with their respective contingents. Thus after "one of the most rapid marches he had ever undertaken" Abdali crossed the Indus and other rivers and reached Lahore. On being asked the reason of this sudden invasion without any arrangements whatsoever, he said that he had seen the Prophet in a dream and was ordered by him to proceed without delay to the rescue of the beleaguered "followers of Islam," in Jandiala. See *Tarikh-i-Ahmad*, p. 16.

I start from this place and you march from there. Both of us united will root them out.”¹ The Khan agreed and assembling a number of *ghazis* moved from Kalat. He was joined on the way by many a religious enthusiast including the grey-bearded author of *Jang-Namah*. The Khan asked him not to join the expedition but he would not lose the opportunity of participating in the holy war. He was asked by the Khan to prepare an account of the campaign.²

Nāsir Khan crossed the Chenab and passed through Chiniot. It had been destroyed by the Sikhs and “the whole town including its suburbs lay in ruins. Its buildings had been pulled down, and all the mosques were deserted. They were desecrated with dung and fodder of horses.”³ The allies continued their advance till they reached Lahore. Here the king held an assembly in which Nasir Khan assured him that “I would not mind undertaking to powder a mountain if it falls in the way. About the Sikhs I do not care, because they cannot dare face me in the field. They come like thieves to fight.”⁴ It was decided to begin the march early the following morning. But before the army could move, report was brought that the advance guard had been attacked by a Sikh army. The Baluchis supported by some Durrani soldiers were despatched against the enemy. A number of Sikhs were slain in the action and those who could manage to escape fled towards Amritsar. The Shah leaving heavy equipment in Lahore marched on that city, but only to find that the Sikhs had fled from the “Guru-Chack.” The Afghans returned to Lahore to make the necessary preparations for a full-fledged campaign against the raiders. Marching eastwards in a rather leisurely fashion the Shah

¹ *Jang-Namah*, (as quoted in *Studies in the Later Mughal History in the Punjab*, pp. 197-98).

² This has been printed by the Khalsa College.

³ *Jang-Namah*, as quoted in *Studies*, p. 200.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

reached Karnal in February. As Najib, whom he wanted to help, had made peace, it was necessary to reconsider the future programme. Nasir Khan was for going to Delhi, particularly "to get information about 'Ali Guhar and about his intentions, whether he fights us or makes friends with us." But the pressure of the soldiers proved irresistible and he had to yield and return home. On his way back the Shah received Alha Singh and appointed him governor of Sirhind on condition that he would rehabilitate the city, which had been sacked by the Sikhs in January and pay an annual tribute of three lakhs.

Having made these arrangements the Shah began his march towards Lahore. As soon as he had crossed the Sutlej, news came that the Sikhs were assembling in large numbers at the Guru-Chak. The Afghans had hardly advanced a *kos* when they suddenly sighted a large Sikh force and it took them more than a week to overpower the raiders.¹ On its return march when the Shah's army was crossing the Beas, 30,000 Sikhs suddenly fell upon it. The major portion of the Durrani troops had crossed the river but the Shah was still there. He arranged his soldiers in battle array and pushed back the enemy. "When all the pig-eating wretched dogs" says the Qazi, "were lost to view by the faithful ones, they returned from the field and stood on the edge of the flowing water. After this victory the return march was resumed. The crossing of Chenab proved an ordeal, in which many men were drowned in the river.....as were not even slain in the battles of the Sikhs." The Jhelum was crossed in safety. Nasir Khan now took leave of the Shah, who thanked him for his support and acknowledged this debt of gratitude by conferring on him the territory of Quetta.

1 The details of the Afghanistan and Baluch clashes with the Sikhs in the Jullundur Doab may be read in Qazi Nuruddin's pages.

2 Quoted in *Studies in the Later Mughals History in the Punjab*, p. 21.

In the absence of Shah the Sikhs seized Lahore and expelled his officers. Abdali was therefore again compelled to invade the Panjab. On the banks of the Jhelum he had to repel two raids of the Sikhs before he could continue his march towards Lahore. When the Sikhs learnt that the Shah was approaching fast, they vacated the city and fled in different directions. From Lahore, which he entered on 22 December 1766,¹ they proceeded towards Sirhind. Amritsar was occupied by Jahan Khan, while the Shah had to advance further. When he reached Ismailabad, Najib-ud-Daulah came to see him (9 March) and advised him to concentrate his full attention on the affairs of the Panjab and the extirpation of the Sikhs, because the Jat menace had been overcome. Ahmad Shah, accordingly, returned to Sirhind and gave its charge to Amar Singh, conferring upon him the high-sounding title of *Rajah-i-Rajgan*. At Machchiwara he halted for about six weeks. The Sikhs had again started trouble and begun to assemble in large numbers at Chak. Another body of these raiders had marched eastwards into the territory of Najib-ud-Daulah and plundered some places. The Shah despatched Jahan Khan. He covered more than 125 miles in three days, took the enemy unawares and routed his forces in a battle near Shamli.² Within a week Jahan Khan returned to Machchiwara having gained a brilliant victory over the Sikhs although they had been numerically superior. After this Abdali returned to Qandahar.

The next invasion (1768-69) was neither long nor effective, because for reasons of failing health Abdali

1 Mufti 'Ali-ud-din who wrote his *Ibrat Namah* in 1854 says that in Lahore a deputation of citizens met the king and suggested that the expelled Sikh chief Lahna Singh might be reinstated, because he had been fair to the Muslims. Perhaps this is indication of the fact that as early as the sixties of the eighteenth century the atrocities of the Sikhs had begun to tell upon the moral of the Muslim of the Punjab. Abdali's policy of not carrying his campaign against the Sikhs to their logical end had begun to bear fruit.

2 See Chapter IV.

had to return home from near the Chenab. About the end of 1769 another effort was made to reach the Panjab but as on the previous occasion he had to return home ; this time even without having crossed the Indus (January 1770). Two years later he died in 1186 A.H.¹

Abdali, the builder of modern Afghanistan, played a vital role in the later period of Mughul rule. Cheerful and affable by temperament he was fully capable of maintaining his kingly dignity when and wherever necessary. His enterprise and decision enabled him to rise to the position of a monarch and his courage and activity brought him glory and greatness as a good general. The victory of Panipat has made him immortal in the annals of the east ; and his successive campaigns against the Sikh marauders saved the Panjab for some time from being thrown into anarchy. There is no doubt that the Muslims of that region suffered indescribable miseries at the hands of the Sikhs ; but it is equally true that their fate would have been much more pitiable if Abdali had not come to their rescue. After the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I there was no statesman in the sub continent who could give a proper lead to the Muslims. Even his efforts in this direction had only met with a partial success, and it was in utter disappointment that he had chosen to lay the foundation of a semi-independent state in the south. That it was not a proper remedy is quite obvious. Since 1724 therefore, Mughul power had been hastening on the road of disintegration. The Marathas were extending their domination and province after province was coming either under their direct rule or their sphere of influence. The establishment of Maratha power even with the

¹ There are differences among authorities as to the actual date. Malleson puts it in June 1773 (p. 292), perhaps relying on Elphinstone (*Caubul*, Vol. II, p. 354). The author of the *Studies in the Later Mughal History in the Panjab* has accepted the version of the anonymous *Delhi Chronicle* which gives 14 April 1773. The inscription on the grave mentions 1186 A. H. which commenced on Saturday, 4 April 1772 and lasted till 24 March 1773. It seems it could be neither June nor April 1773.

facade of a Timurid prince on the throne of Delhi would have brought about the destruction of the very foundations of that remarkable culture, which had been built up in the course of a thousand years.¹ The Jats and the Sikhs, though insignificant at the moment, were potential dangers to Indian Islam. The only statesman who could visualise the horrible consequences of the thoughtless policy of the government was Najib-ud-Daulah. He had received inspiration from the great thinker, Shah Waliullah, and he ultimately succeeded in persuading Muslim chiefs to join their forces under the common leadership of Abdali, who thus became the symbol of the united efforts of the Muslims to free themselves from the domination of a hegemony of hostile powers—the Marathas, the Jats and the Sikhs.

¹ It is interesting to note in this connection that Ibrahim Gardi, who held an important command in the Maratha army and who laid down his life rather than betray the confidence of his masters, had to use the significantly Hindu expression *Ram Ram* when offering his greetings to the Bhao. ~

CHAPTER X

THE ROHILLAS

The tempting prospect of finding military service and the "hope of finding distinction and wealth" drew a large number of adventurers from Afghanistan during the eighteenth century, most of whom settled down in Aonla, Najibabad, Farrukhabad, Mau, Bareilly, Pilibhit and Bijnor. Of these the most distinguished were the Bangash Pathans who founded a short-lived independent principality under Nawab Muhammad Khan Bangash and the Rohillas who came into prominence with the rise of 'Ali Muhammad Khan (1707-1749). The most famous Rohilla statesman was Najib-ud-Daulah who, for nearly ten years, played a decisive role in the affairs of the Empire; with Hafiz Rahmat Khan's death in 1774 the curtain was rung down on the transient glory of the Afghans in India.

The Afghans were not new to the sub continent. They had twice ruled the Empire of Delhi and they continued to occupy positions of importance under the Mughuls.

The country which witnessed the rise and fall of Afghan power in the eighteenth century was known by the name of Katehr before the Rohillas succeeded in firmly establishing themselves there.

Daud Khan was the slave of Mahmud Khan, an Afghan of Badalzai clan, whose family was renowned for its sanctity. Daud Khan had a restless spirit and arrived in Katehr in the reign of Bahadur Shah (1707-1712). The *zamindars* of that region were always anxious to secure the services of hardy warlike Afghan adventurers. Daud entered the service of Madar Shah

the *zamindar* of Madkar during hostilities against a neighbouring *zamindar*. This probably occurred in 1715. Amongst other prisoners he obtained a young Jat boy of eight years.¹ Daud took a fancy to him and adopted him as his son and named him 'Ali Muhammad Khan.²

The fame of Daud's courage and dash spread in the country and he was joined by other Afghan soldiers of fortune. He sold his sword to the highest bidder and was, at one time, employed by the Emperor against the Marathas. During this campaign he distinguished himself by his bravery and captured a number of elephants and other spoils. In recognition of his services he obtained from the court the grant of a number of *parganahs* in the district of Badaun.

Daud Khan soon after quitted the service of Madar Shah and joined Debi Chand, the raja of Kumaon. The imperial government had watched with anxiety the growing refractoriness of the *zamindars* of this region and commanded 'Azmat-ullah Khan the newly appointed *faujdar* of Moradabad to lead a punitive expedition against the raja of Kumaon. The raja was defeated, and suspecting Daud Khan of duplicity he had him and some of his followers treacherously murdered. On the death of Daud his principal officers placed 'Ali Muhammad in command of Daud's forces.

'Ali Muhammad was then only 14 years of age. Soon after, he and his retainers, came under the protection of 'Azmat-ullah. 'Ali Muhammad Khan

¹ According to *Tarikh-i-Faiz Bakhsh*, 'Ali Muhammad Khan was the son of Daud Khan. According to another tradition 'Ali Muhammad Khan's father was a Sayyid who had married a Jat woman. Najmul Ghani of Rampur has tried to establish that 'Ali Muhammad Khan was a Sayyid by birth; most of the Persian authorities speak of him as being born of Jat parents.

Ma'asir-ul-Umara, II., No. 25, pp. 857-862.

Siya-ul Mutaakhirin, II, 480, *Tarikh-i-Faiz Bakhsh*, f.12b.

Akhbar-us-Sanadid (Urdu), 1918; I, 80-84.

² He appeared to have taken a great liking to 'Ali Muhammad Khan, so much so that his sons became jealous of the favours shown to him by their father. 'Azmatullah Khan gave his daughter in marriage to 'Ali Muhammad Khan.

now took possession of Daud Khan's *jagir* at Beoli. He later succeeded in capturing Aonla which henceforth became his headquarters.

In 1737 'Ali Muhammad Khan was invited by the *wazir*, Qamar-ud-din Khan, to join the imperial army under the command of 'Azim-ullah Khan against Saif-ud-din 'Ali Khan, brother of Hussain 'Ali Khan of Barha. 'Ali Muhammad Khan readily responded and distinguished himself in the battle of Jansath by his conspicuous bravery. In appreciation of his services the *wazir* obtained for him concessions in revenue and the title of *Nawab* with permission to use the *naubat*.

It was about this time that 'Ali Muhammad Khan was joined by Hafiz Rahmat Khan. Rahmat Khan was the grand son of Daud Khan's master, Muhammad Khan. He was born in 1708. He was four years old when his father was murdered in India. He came to India some time after the Battle of Jansath at 'Ali Muhammad Khan's invitation. He was received with respect. 'Ali Muhammad's relations with Rahmat Khan remained cordial. He ultimately settled down in Katehr and was assigned twelve villages and a military command.

'Ali Muhammad Khan's power was considerably increased by the acquisition of several adjoining *parganahs*. The *zamindars* made constant complaints to the imperial officers of the highhandedness of the Rohillas, whose numbers and boldness had considerably increased, particularly during Nadir Shah's invasion. The Emperor, Muhammad Shah, deputed Raja Harnand with fifty-thousand horse and foot in 1741 to expel 'Ali Muhammad Khan from Katehr. 'Ali Muhammad with his Rohillas offered resistance and Harnand's army was defeated with great slaughter at the village of Asalatpur Tarai.

The raja's camp was plundered and immense booty fell into the hands of the Rohillas. This success resulted

in the accretion of territory and resources, while thousands of Afghans flocked to his victorious standard. 'Ali Muhammad Khan followed up his victory by despatching his *'amils* to Moradabad, Sambhal, Amroha, Shahjahanpur and several *parganahs* of Bareilly. Pilibhit was captured from the *banjaras* and added to the *jagir* of Hafiz Rahmat Khan. Mir Mannu, the son of the *wazir*, Qamar-ud-din, was next sent against 'Ali Muhammad Khan but the latter won him over and gave him his daughter in marriage. 'Ali Muhammad Khan was afterwards confirmed in the territory he had acquired.

Two years later in 1743 'Ali Muhammad Khan sent out an army under the command of Rahmat Khan and others against the raja of Kumaon, who being defeated at Rudurpur retired to Burrkhera where he sustained another defeat. He then fled to Almora. This town was also captured and the province of Kumaon passed into the hands of the Rohillas. The whole of Bijnor district became theirs soon afterwards. The territories acquired by the Rohillas commanded the highways to Delhi which it was the ambition of Safdar Jang to dominate. He, therefore, induced the Emperor to send an army against 'Ali Muhammad Khan under his command. The Emperor accompanied this expedition.

'Ali Muhammad Khan surrendered himself and was presented before the Emperor with his hands tied with a silk handkerchief. The latter forgave 'Ali Muhammad Khan on the recommendation of the *wazir* and accepted from him the *nazr* of one thousand *ashrafis*. 'Ali Muhammad Khan was carried as a prisoner to Delhi.¹

After about six months Rahmat Khan and other officers of 'Ali Muhammad Khan made a demonstration in the vicinity of Delhi with nearly 7000 horse and foot and so alarmed the imperialists that the *wazir* obtained his

¹ *Safar-Namah-i-Mukhlis*, p. 79; *Imadus-Sa'adat*, p. 43.

release and the governorship of Sirhind. Two of his sons Faiz-ullah Khan and 'Abdullah Khan were kept as hostages at Delhi.

At Sirhind 'Ali Muhammad Khan, with his characteristic energy and administrative ability, set about restoring order and compelling the refractory *zamindars* to pay the arrears of revenue. Hafiz Rahmat Khan was sent against the most headstrong of the *zamindars* and succeeded in breaking their resistance. He compelled them to pay the arrears as well as huge indemnities.

In 1748 Ahmad Shah Abdali captured Lahore, put its governor to flight and was proceeding towards Delhi. Muhammad Shah, fearing the defection of the large Afghan force under 'Ali Muhammad Khan, removed him from Sirhind and appointed him governor of Katehr.¹ Ahmad Shah Abdali soon afterwards captured Sirhind but following the Battle of Manopur retired to Qandahar and took with him 'Abdullah Khan and Faiz-ullah Khan, the sons of 'Ali Muhammad Khan, who had been kept as prisoners in Sirhind.

'Ali Muhammad Khan's surrender to the Emperor abolished his authority in Katehr, and the *jagirs* seized by him were restored to their rightful owners. In 1746 Ghazi-ud-din Firuz Khan sent Hidayat 'Ali Khan to his estate of Bareilly and seventeen other *mahals* but the latter in spite of his tact and ability found it extremely difficult to control thousands of Afghans who were living there, "and having struck their roots, had seized the land."

The arrival of 'Ali Muhammad Khan back in Katehr with his numerous followers made Hidayat's work impossible. Within a month's time he re-established himself in his former possessions, appointed his own

¹ *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, pt 24. According to Sarkar, 'Ali Muhammad Khan deserted his post at Sirhind.

officers and once again restored law and order in the land.

Muhammad Shah died in 1748 and was succeeded by Ahmad Shah. The old *wazir* Qamar-ud-din Khan also being dead, there was a keen contest for the office. Safdar Jang secured 'Ali Muhammad Khan's support and acquired the office through the efforts of Rahmat Khan and Jawid Khan. 'Ali Muhammad Khan died in 1749 and was buried at Aonla. Hafiz Rahmat Khan acted as regent to the minor heir, Sa'd-ullah Khan. A daring and enterprising soldier, a cautious and skilful diplomat, and a prudent and wise statesman, 'Ali Muhammad Khan well deserved the success he had won.

Two months after the death of 'Ali Muhammad Khan, Safdar Jang, forgetting the assistance the dead Rohilla chief had rendered him, again began to plot against the Rohillas. He succeeded in securing the appointment of Qutb-ud-din whose father had been appointed governor of Moradabad after the capture of 'Ali Muhammad Khan by Muhammad Shah. When Qutb-ud-din unwarily crossed the Ganges, he was opposed by Dunde Khan and other Afghans who defeated his army and slew him. Safdar Jang now decided to make Qaim Khan Bangash play his game by winning over the Rohillas, "observing that if he should be slain, there would be one Afghan less ; and that if he succeeded, the province would again become subject to the King."

Qaim Khan had neither the courage to refuse the appointment nor the wisdom to see through the diplomacy of Safdar Jang. He sent Murtaza Khan to Aonla to secure the acquiescence of Rahmat Khan to the imperial *farman* appointing him to the governorship. Rahmat Khan and his officers indignantly refused to accept the appointment ; therefore military action was necessary.

When Qaim Khan crossed the Ganges at Farrukhabad to meet the Rohillas an attempt was made by Rahmat Khan to dissuade Qaim Khan from fighting by deputing

Sayyid Ahmad, commonly known as Shahji Mian, to bring about a compromise; Qaim refused to accept his advice by contemptuously remarking that "this was a matter in which holy men had no business to meddle."

In 1749 Qaim Khan's army consisting of 60,000 horse and foot with 400 elephants and a large train of artillery attacked the Rohillas whose entire army did not exceed twentyfive thousand men. The battle which was fought in the village of Dauree, three miles south-east of Badaun, ended in the complete rout of Qaim Khan's army and his death on the battle field. Hafiz Rahmat Khan annexed the *pargana*hs of Badaun, Mehrabad, Usaith and Puramnagar east of the Ganges to his own dominion.

Rahmat Khan now turned his attention to the tract of country lying at the foot of the hills near the Sarju or Gogra river. After difficult but successful operations lasting nearly four months Rahmat Khan succeeded in occupying almost the whole area. The raja submitted and offered to pay a huge tribute. His submission was accepted and he was granted a *sanad*.

Safdar Jang "received the news of the death of his tool Qaim Khan with nearly as much pleasure as he would have heard of his victory." He immediately marched on Farrukhabad, which he captured. Qaim Khan's sons were imprisoned in the fort of Allahabad and all the females of Qaim's family were freely mulcted and deprived of all their jewels. Nawal Rai was appointed by Safdar Jang to hold Farrukhabad. Ahmad Khan the younger brother of the late nawab who was in residence at Delhi fled to Mau collecting his father's supporters around him.

Nawal Rai plundered Farrukhabad at will and with the booty so collected returned to Lucknow with the mother of Qaim Khan. This lady was kept in confinement there but succeeded in escaping with

the help of an old and loyal servant of the family, Sahib Rai. Safdar Jang on hearing this ordered Nawal Rai to pursue and recapture the lady but on his way to Farrukhabad Nawal Rai's party was waylaid by Ahmad Khan and Rustam Khan Afridi on the banks of the Kali Nadi. Nawal Rai was cut to pieces and Ahmad Khan proceeded to Farrukhabad and took possession of his paternal property.

At the loss of Farrukhabad Safdar Jang assembled a large army and with the assistance of Suraj Mal Jat marched against the Afghans. Ahmad Khan realising the gravity of the situation appealed to Rahmat Khan for assistance, and the latter sent an army to his assistance under Waris Khan and other Afghan officers. Ahmad Khan came out of Farrukhabad and inflicted a defeat on the Oudh army. Suraj Mal, thinking that Safdar Jang had been killed, withdrew his men from the field. This was an unexpected victory and the Afghans proceeded to plunder the enemy's camp and divide up the booty. Elated by their unexpected success, Ahmad Khan thought of capturing the provinces of Oudh and Allahabad with the help of the Rohilla chiefs. Shaikh Kabir and other Afghan officers quickly took possession of Shahabad and Khairabad. In pursuance of this scheme Ahmad Khan sent his son Mahmud against Oudh, and personally proceeded to lay siege to Allahabad. On hearing of this, Safdar Jang who had nearly recovered from his wound, ordered the *qil'adar* of Allahabad to put to death the five sons of Qaim Khan and summoned to his assistance the Maratha chiefs Malhar Rao Holkar and Jayappa Sindhia. They promised to help him for a daily allowance of 25,000 rupees.

Safdar Jang has been rightly condemned for seeking the help of the Marathas. From this time onward Delhi, the Panjab and the Doab became their happy hunting grounds, and many of the troubles of the northern Indian princes may be attributed to their

failure to offer a united front to the northward flow of the devastating flood of Maratha invasions. The Marathas advanced to Etawah and defeated A'zam Khan and Shahdil Khan. Ahmad Khan, frightened by the appearance of the Marathas, ordered his son to return from Lucknow and, raising the siege of Allahabad, returned to Farrukhabad. Safdar Jang fitted out a large army and with the field train and heavy artillery which he secured through the good offices of Jawid Khan he issued out of Delhi and joined the Marathas.

Ahmad Khan appealed to the Rohilla chiefs at Aonla for assistance but Rahmat Khan and Dunde Khan refused to be drawn into the conflict. Sa'dullah Khan, in spite of the remonstrances of Hafiz Rahmat Khan, left Aonla with 12,000 men and proceeded to Ahmad Khan's assistance. This decision of Rahmat Khan and Dunde Khan to stay out of the fight and not to help Ahmad Khan was imprudent as well as unchivalrous. Sa'dullah's army was defeated by the Marathas on April 28, 1751 near Fatehgarh and he returned to Aonla completely crestfallen without a single attendant. The Rohillas, who escaped slaughter after a futile attempt to rally their forces, were driven back to Aonla where they were joined by Ahmad Khan and his clansmen. The significance of this victory was fully realised by the Marathas who were jubilant. Fearing a large scale invasion of Katehr by the combined armies of Safdar Jang and his allies, Rahmat Khan despatched Afghan officers with their families through Rampur, Moradabad and Kashipur to the hilly country till they reached Chilkiya.¹

He himself joined them shortly afterwards and the place was carefully entrenched. Safdar Jang and the

¹ Chilkiya is 22 miles north east of Kashipur. According to *Gulistan-i-Rahmat* and *Hadiqatul-Aqalim* they took refuge at Lal Diggi. According to *Ma'sir-ul-Umara* and *Siyar-ul-Muta'akhirin* they went to the foot of Madaria Hills.

Gulistan-i-Rahmat, p. 43.

Hadiqatul-Aqalim, 674.

Ma'sirul Umara, I, 367.

Siyar, III, 882; Hamilton, p. 110.

Marathas surrounded the Afghan force but the difficulties of the terrain, disease in their camp and the news of the impending invasion of India by Ahmad Shah Abdali disheartened the besiegers. The Emperor, alarmed by the news of Abdali's invasion, sent an urgent *farman* urging Safdar Jang to make peace with the Afghans. Negotiations were opened through the good offices of Safdar's Maratha allies. Hafiz Rahmat Khan and Mahmud Khan waited on the *wazir* who agreed to end hostilities on payment of an indemnity of thirty lakhs of rupees. The peace treaty was finally signed at Lucknow in February, 1752.

Safdar Jang now marched back to Lucknow and requested Hafiz Rahmat Khan to accompany him. The latter's officers distrusted Safdar Jang and pressed Rahmat Khan to decline the offer. The latter had the courage and the good sense to accept the invitation and accompanied Safdar Jang as far as Mohan, 15 miles south-west of Lucknow. At the time of parting Safdar Jang showed every consideration to Rahmat Khan and gave him rich presents.

On his return Hafiz Rahmat Khan devoted himself to carrying out much needed reforms in the revenue and police administration of his territories and in particular to restoring order in the turbulent *parganahs* of Mehrabad and Jalalabad.

Towards the end of the year 1752 'Abdullah Khan and Faiz-ullah Khan, the sons of 'Ali Muhammad Khan, were released by Ahmad Shah Abdali as a gesture of good will to his Afghan compatriots in India and sent back to Katehr "with a letter strongly recommending their guardians to carry out 'Ali Muhammad's will." Rahmat Khan was inclined to resign the government to 'Abdullah Khan but most of his officers refused to acknowledge the latter's supremacy because of his youth. With the consent of the senior officers and the concurrence of the sons of 'Ali Muhammad Khan the

estate of the latter was split up into three parts, one part was assigned to each of the three elder brothers and one younger brother was attached to each of them. This arrangement weakened the solidarity of 'Ali Muhammad Khan's family and led to their ruin. 'Abdullah attempted to poison Rahmat Khan but the attempt was foiled. Hafiz Rahmat Khan, in self defence, ordered 'Abdullah to quit the country. He took refuge with Ahmad Khan Bangash who interceded on his behalf. Hafiz Rahmat Khan agreed to assign 'Abdullah the town of Ujhiani with *parganahs* yielding an income of four lakhs of rupees.

Rahmat Khan now turned his attention to the improvement of Pilibhit. The name of the town was changed to Hafizabad and a new palace, a *Diwan-i-'Am* and a *Diwan-i-Khas* were erected there.

Shortly afterwards, following a quarrel, Safdar Jang caused Jawid Khan to be murdered. The Emperor was enraged at this, dismissed Safdar Jang and appointed Intizam-ud-Daulah in his place. Safdar Jang left Delhi in disgrace but encamped at a distance from Delhi and prepared to fight against the imperialists. He summoned Rahmat Khan to his assistance and the latter readily responded. At Hapur an emissary of the Emperor met him and conveyed to him the Emperor's wishes that he should join the imperial army against Safdar Jang. There were heated discussions in the Afghan camp about the expediency or otherwise of the Afghans throwing in their lot with one party or the other. Rahmat Khan, however, thought it prudent to remain neutral in this domestic conflict of Delhi politicians and decided to go back to his country. The only Rohilla officer who responded to the Emperor's call was Najib-ud-Daulah who went to Delhi and placed his services at the disposal of the Emperor. Safdar Jang was defeated and, realising the futility of resistance, returned to Lucknow where he died in 1756 and was succeeded by

his son Shuja'-ud-Daulah.

Rahmat Khan was deeply annoyed at the defection of Najib Khan who had deserted with several other troopers and joined the imperialists without his permission. This was not only an act of indiscipline but seriously endangered the solidarity of the Afghans. Rahmat Khan held Dund Khan, who was Najib's father-in-law responsible for this act. The latter protested his complete ignorance of the whole affair and a serious rift in the ranks of the Afghans was prevented by the loyalty and courage of Dund Khan, who rather than accept Rahmat Khan's challenge to fight presented himself at Aonla and succeeded in dispelling the suspicions of Rahmat Khan.

Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India in 1757 for the fourth time. When he reached Delhi, Rahmat Khan sent his submission to Ahmad Shah through his *wakil*, Ya'qub Khan. The latter received the *wakil* and honoured him with a *Khil'at* and ordered Rahmat Khan to proceed with 'Imad-ul-Mulk's army to realise the *peshkash* due from Shuja'-ud-Daulah. The latter wrote to Rahmat Khan in the hope of detaching him from 'Imad-ul-Mulk on the score of his past friendship with Safdar Jang. Rahmat Khan pleaded his inability to refuse the royal orders but promised to persuade 'Imad-ul-Mulk to desist from further hostilities. The latter was anxious to humiliate his old rival and demanded a sum of money which Shuja'-ud-Daulah had no means of paying. The two armies faced each other but an open battle was averted by the diplomatic skill of Rahmat Khan. 'Imad-ul-Mulk ultimately agreed to accept five lakhs of rupees as immediate payment towards the claim of *peshkash* and a further sum to be paid later by instalments.

'Imad-ul-Mulk pursued his round of intrigues at Delhi. Prince 'Ali Guhar had incurred his displeasure

and fled for his life from Delhi. He took refuge with the Rohillas. 'Inayat Khan the son of Rahmat Khan received him with due courtesy and presented the fugitive prince with several elephants and horses and other equipment for his journey to Bengal.

After the flight of 'Ali Guhar, 'Imad-ul-Mulk turned against Najib-ud-Daulah. He called to his assistance the Marathas and Najib was compelled to entrench himself at Shukkartal. At his urgent appeal for help Rahmat Khan and Shuja'-ud-Daulah marched to his assistance. The Marathas finding it difficult to dislodge Najib from his entrenched position and hearing that Abdali was again marching on India raised the siege. 'Imad-ul-Mulk returned to Delhi where he put to death the Emperor 'Alamgir II and raised to the throne a grandson of Kam Bakhsh.

When Ahmad Shah Abdali entered the Doab, Hafiz Rahmat Khan waited upon him and was most graciously received. He was later commissioned to proceed against Suraj Mal and on his return to Koil, he was again honoured by being admitted to the royal presence, and Ahmad Khan Bangash and Shuja'-ud-Daulah were also admitted to an audience on 19 July, 1760.

In the Battle of Panipat the Rohillas fought under Ahmad Shah. On his return from India Ahmad Shah gave Shikohabad to Faiz-ullah Khan, Jalesar and Firozabad to Sa'd-ullah and Etawah to Hafiz Rahmat Khan and Dunde Khan. The Shah "foreseeing that Shuja'-ud-Daulah would excite strife among them" proposed to take him as hostage to Qandahar. Rahmat Khan interceded for him but the Shah "gave a reluctant assent, warning Hafiz that Shuja'-ud-Daulah would not let the Afghans remain in peace."¹

Mulla Mohsin Khan was now sent with ten thousand horse to capture Etawah. After a stout resistance by the Marathas the fort was occupied but the *zamindars*

¹ *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, Elliot, p. 67.

refused to pay the revenue and it was only after the arrival of Shaikh Kabir and Mulla Baz Khan that the mud forts of the recalcitrant *zamindars* were raised to the ground and Etawah secured.

The years 1761 to 1769 were years of peace and prosperity for the Rohillas. The Marathas had been driven away from northern India and for nearly ten years after this they remained harmless. Rohilla territories during these years comprised Bareilly, Pilibhit, Sambhal, Moradabad, Amroha, Shahjahanpur, Rampur, Shahabad, Badaun, Aonla, Nanakmata, Sehswan, Ujhyani, Sarah, Thakurdwara, Chaumahala, Etawah, Shikohabad, Mainpuri and several *parganahs* right up to Khairabad at the foot of the hills. There was internal peace and freedom from fear of foreign invasions. The land was well cultivated, commerce prospered and the interests of the governed were well cared for. But a new power was rising in the east which ultimately overshadowed the Indian powers and led to the ruin of the Rohillas.

After the massacre of Patna in 1763, Mir Qasim had been defeated and driven from Bengal by the English ; he applied to the Nawab-Wazir of Oudh for assistance, who, in his turn applied to the Rohillas. A considerable force was despatched under 'Inayat Khan, who returned however, before the defeat of the confederacy at Buxar by Sir Hector Munro on October 22, 1764. Najib-ud-Daulah was at this time besieged in Delhi by the Jats and the Marathas, while a body of Sikhs were ravaging his territories. Hafiz Rahmat advanced as far as Hasanpur to his assistance, but he had no need to cross the Ganges, since the mere rumour that Ahmad Shah was coming again dispersed the assailants. In the meanwhile the English, after their victory at Buxar, advanced on Allahabad. Shuja'-ud-Daulah abandoned Lucknow in fright and joined Hafiz Rahmat at Hasanpur. They were further strengthened by some

Marathas under Holkar and marched against the English, but the combined forces were defeated at Kara on May 3, 1765 by General Carnac.

In 1769 the Marathas, who had become aggressive once more, crossed the Jumna under Mahadji Sindhia and Tukaji Holkar. They were joined by Najib-ud-Daulah, and their combined forces marched against Ahmad Khan of Farrukhabad. But at Koil, Najib-ud-Daulah fell ill and died. Hafiz Rahmat joined Ahmad Khan against the Marathas, but his troops were mutinous and discontented, and after a few skirmishes, Hafiz Rahmat was compelled to surrender the territory that Abdali had given the Rohillas. In 1770 Dunde Khan died at Bisoli which was another blow to Afghan power.

The death of Najib-ud-Daulah, in October 1770, was a great loss for the Rohillas. He had never been on really good terms either with Hafiz Rahmat Khan or with the Bangash Nawabs but his position at Delhi and his active and fruitful diplomacy had kept alive the wholesome fear of an Afghan confederacy. The Marathas had not forgotten the humiliating defeat of Panipat which they mainly ascribed to the Rohillas, particularly Najib-ud-Daulah, and the Nawab-Wazir of Oudh. Encouraged by the death of Najib-ud-Daulah, the differences amongst the Afghan chiefs and the promised support of the Emperor who had put himself into their hands, the Marathas joined the imperial armies under Najaf Khan and proceeded against Zabita Khan, the son and successor of Najib-ud-Daulah. Near Shukkartal the Afghans disputed their passage but they were defeated and dispersed. The Marathas entered Rohilkhand and plundered and devastated the country.

The incursion of the Marathas into Rohilkhand with imperial support alarmed the Rohillas. Shuja'-ud-Daulah realised the danger to which the occupation of Rohilkhand by the Marathas would expose his own

dominions, since they were most vulnerable from that side. The English in Bengal were equally anxious about the consequences of Maratha domination of Rohilkhand and Oudh which could expose their recently acquired territories to the onslaught of the Marathas.

Shuja'-ud-Daulah immediately approached the Calcutta government requesting them to despatch the commander-in-chief, Sir Robert Barker, to meet him at Faizabad to discuss ways and means of meeting the common enemy. Barker met the *wazir* on 20 January, 1772. The *wazir* argued that there was a possibility of the Rohillas making peace with the Marathas by ceding a portion of their territory and perhaps ultimately joining them ; or if such overtures should be rejected by the Marathas, they would capture the territories of the Rohillas and the territory and wealth so acquired would make them formidable enemies in close contiguity to his dominions. He had received a request for military assistance from the Rohilla chiefs and Zabita Khan. If British military assistance was accorded to him he would be able to effect a compromise which would maintain his prestige with the Emperor, drive away the Marathas and reduce the power of the Rohillas who, to him, were not trusted allies but, at the very least, tolerated enemies.

On 3 February, 1772 the Bengal government agreed to render assistance to the *wazir* and the latter marched with his troops towards the frontiers of Rohilkhand. Negotiations were opened with Rahmat Khan but mutual suspicion made any concerted action difficult. After an assurance given by Barker, Hafiz Rahmat Khan agreed to proceed to the assistance of Zabita Khan. Shuja'-ud-Daulah was to remain in his own territory on the frontiers of Rohilkhand.

The Marathas crossed the Ganges, completely defeated the Rohillas and sent them flying for refuge to the jungles at the foot of the hills. The danger became

real and Robert Barker, at the request of the *wazir*, ordered Colonel Champion who then was stationed at Dinapur to march into Oudh. The Marathas, desirous of breaking up the alliance between the *wazir* and the Rohillas, entered into communication with both parties holding out in each case such inducements as they thought likely to be successful. The British were determined to prevent the *wazir* from coming to terms with the Marathas.

Barker sent Captain Harper to Hafiz Rahmat Khan to confer with him in order to secure his concurrence to an agreement with the *wazir* regarding the expulsion of the Marathas but on 10 May, 1772, Barker reported that these negotiations had completely broken down. Hafiz Rahmat Khan responded to an invitation to meet Barker and the *wazir* at Shahabad. He met them there on 25 May accompanied by Zabita Khan and the principal Afghan chiefs. On 17 June a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, was concluded between the Rohillas and the *wazir*. The treaty was in two parts. The first was of a general character establishing friendship between the Rohillas and the *wazir*.

The second part of the treaty stipulated that "the *Vizir* of the Empire, Shujah-ud-daulah, shall establish the Rohilla *Sirdars* in their different possessions, obliging the Marhattas to retire either by peace or war; this to depend on the pleasure of the *Vizir*. If at this time without either war or peace, the Marhattas, on account of the rains, shall cross and retire and after the expiration of the rainy season they should again enter the country of the Rohillas, their expulsion is the business of the *Vizir*. The Rohillas *Sirdars*, in consequence of the above, agree to pay forty lakhs of rupees to the *Vizir*."

This agreement was sealed in the presence of General Sir Robert Barker.¹

This unfortunate treaty into which the Rohillas had been trapped was fraught with dangerous consequences

¹ Strachey, p. 54. Aitchison's *Treatises and Engagements*, I, 5.

to their existence and was the beginning of the end of their rule in Rohilkhand.

With the approach of the rainy season and on learning of the treaty of alliance between the *wazir* and Rohillas with the active support of the British, the Marathas crossed the river and evacuated Rohilkhand after having devastated the countryside terribly. Hafiz Rahmat Khan returned to Pilibhit and the other chiefs returned to their estates. During the four months that the Rohillas had been in hiding in the jungles of Tarai nearly 20,000 persons had died of pestilence and the unfavourable climate.¹ Bakhshi Sardar Khan died soon afterwards and Hafiz Rahmat Khan lost another of his faithful collaborators whose piety, character and benevolence as an administrator have been highly praised.

The danger from the Marathas had temporarily passed but the real danger began when the Rohillas, whose only hope lay in their solidarity, began to quarrel amongst themselves.

Zabita Khan's family had been restored to him by the Marathas. Anxious to secure the office of his father at Delhi he joined the Marathas in July 1772. This was a serious blow to the former alliance between himself and Shuja'-ud-Daulah and Rahmat Khan, and the Marathas followed this with a determined move to dissolve the alliance and demanded of the *wazir* "if he would ensure his son tranquillity at the conclusion of the rains to cede to them the province of Korah, Allahabad and Benares, to deliver into their hands the settlement he had made with the Rohillas, to discharge all sums for which the King now stood indebted to them and to unite with them against every opponent."² Shuja'-ud-Daulah immediately wrote to Hastings for military assistance. "My enemy speaks plainly and demands my country", he wrote. Towards the end of 1772 the Marathas returned

¹ This year of Salamiti was known as "*Qaza-i-marduma*."

² Strachey, p. 95.

to Delhi; Zabita Khan was restored to office and the Emperor was forced to assign Kara and Allahabad to them. Shuja'-ud-Daulah was thoroughly alarmed and was afraid that the Rohillas would follow the example of Zabita Khan and break up the alliance by joining the Marathas or acquiescing in their demand to let their armies pass through the Rohilla country towards Oudh. There were rumours of such an agreement having been entered into between the Marathas and the Rohillas. Shuja'-ud-Daulah again wrote to the Bengal government for assistance: "My country is in reality the door to Bengal and I am what you may call the barrier to that country."¹

Sir Robert Barker was instructed to hold discussions with the *wazir* and to take any necessary action for the defence and security of Shuja's country, together with the provinces of Kara and Allahabad. Rohilkhand was to be included in the line of defence and he was authorised to enter into a treaty with Hafiz Rahmat Khan for the defence of his territories if he agreed to pay for such military assistance. He was further instructed to take notice "that no operation for the Wazir's defence shall be carried into execution without a previous stipulation on his part for the extraordinary charge attending the succour we afford him. We have estimated this at Rs. 115,000 per month, and have required an assignment on his revenue for the amountIf, in either case, the Wazir should refuse complying with these requisitions in their fullest extent, and shall persist in the refusal, it is our positive command that you immediately abandon him and withdraw your whole force from the country."² Thus the Bengal government was to be paid out of the revenues of Oudh for guarding its own perilously exposed territories against the Marathas. In their report to the Court of Directors the Bengal government explained that the real enemies were the Marathas and

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

² Forrest, *Selections*, I, 34.

that "if we have a war with them it is better to meet them beyond the line of our own frontiers, supporting the Wazir, our best barrier, our expenses paid and in a manner defending ourselves, rather than confine ourselves to our own possessions and our own resources."¹

The combined forces of the *wazir* and Company entered Rohilkhand in early March, 1773 and marched towards Ramghat where the Marathas were encamped. The attitude of the Rohillas was still doubtful. Barker strongly suspected, and the *wazir* was fully convinced, that the Rohillas had entered into a separate treaty with the Marathas. Hafiz Rahmat Khan in a letter to Hastings made his position quite clear. After expressing his desire for friendship, he recapitulates the circumstances in which he promised to pay forty lakhs of rupees. He then complains that "the gentlemen never came to any negotiations with the Marhattas so as to put an end to their operations, nor ventured to attack them, but finally returned towards Faizabad, leaving their engagements unfulfilled. When the rainy season commenced, the Marhattas of themselves crossed the Ganges and encamped in the Doab, threatening me still with hostilities. During the rains I repeatedly called on the Nawab, the General and Captain Barker to conclude these affairs with His Majesty and the Marhattas, but they came to no determination on the subject, nor took any measures of security. When the rainy season was drawing to an end, and the Marhattas had approached the banks of the Ganges, they demanded of me sums of money, which after much temporizing, I was at last obliged to pay them. Afterwards they went to the Presence, and procured a *Sanad* for Kora and Allahabad, with which they returned to the banks of the Ganges and made preparations of building bridges for crossing it; and at the same time sent a person of their confidence to demand payment of the money which had been

¹ Strachey, p. 72.

stipulated saying it belonged to them and the King; and also with many inducements requested that I would let them pass through my territories, assuring me that they would commit no depredations or ravages on the *ryots*, and they would pass through with expedition towards the *Soubah* of Oudh, or withersoever they thought proper. They also engaged to remit me a large sum on account of the stipulation, and to do whatever was agreeable and would give satisfaction to the Rohella Sirdars. At this juncture the Nawab and the General having arrived near, they sent to me Shah Muddun and Syed Mohammad Mukraim Cawn, desiring that I would enter into no terms with the Marhattas; and they would give me back my engagement for forty lakhs of rupees, and do everything both for my present and future security. Having, therefore, in view the long friendship which had subsisted between the Nawab Wazir and the English gentlemen and myself I declined all offers made by the Marhattas and came over to them, in revenge for which it is well known that the Marhattas recrossed the Ganges and plundered Moradabad and Sambhal. The gentlemen promised that they would cross and continue on the other side of the Ganges during the rains, and would not return to Faizabad or Calcutta until they had entirely driven away the Marhattas and fully satisfied themselves both with respect to their own and my security. But at length they left everything unfinished; and after temporizing for a long time with the Marhattas returned to their own homes, leaving me still a prey to the Marhattas. You are no doubt acquainted with all these proceedings. It is a point which requires justice and consideration. As a friendship has long been established between us, I doubt not but you will at all times and on all occasions wish to preserve it."

Taking advantage of his relations with the English and the predicament in which the Rohillas found

themselves, Shuja'-ud-Daulah for the first time seriously suggested to Barker the desirability of expelling the Rohillas and annexing their territory which would result in mutual benefit to him and to the English. Barker immediately communicated this to Hastings. In a private letter to Colonel Brooks, Hastings confessed that "The Vizir has fixed his ambition on the Rohilla's country, and has made tempting offers for our assistance in conquering it for him." Hastings was yet undecided as to whether he should encourage the *wazir* further in this or advise him to go slow, but the idea had taken firm root in his mind and he waited with his usual perspicacity to explore further the possibilities of such a venture.

An actual armed conflict with the Marathas was put off as Barker had strict orders not to cross the Ganges and he was not certain about the attitude of the Rohillas. In addition the Marathas wished to avoid an open conflict with the English. On 21 March, Hafiz Rahmat Khan intimated his intention of joining the *wazir* against the Marathas. Hafiz Rahmat Khan met Barker in his camp and promised to carry out his earlier undertaking to pay forty lakhs to the *wazir* for military assistance against the Marathas. The latter agreed to pay half of this money to the Company and if he, Hafiz Rahmat Khan, failed to pay the amount and the English helped Shuja' to extirpate them and to instal him in their country, in that case he would pay them fifty lakhs of rupees in ready money. The Marathas in the meantime had constructed a bridge of boats at Puth in the Moradabad district and soon afterwards left the country and retreated across the Ganges. On the retirement of the Marathas the *wazir* renewed his demand for the stipulated amount for his expenses but Hafiz Rahmat Khan put him off by saying that he could not pay this amount until he had consulted his other colleagues.

Hastings now seriously considered the proposal

made by the *wazir* in the letter referred to above. On April 22, 1773, he wrote to the *wazir* asking for a meeting where this matter could be discussed more thoroughly. The *wazir* readily agreed to this and met Hastings at Banaras on 19 August. The negotiations were conducted by Hastings personally without an interpreter. The first question that was taken up was the cost of maintaining a brigade of troops when employed in the service of the *wazir*. The cost was estimated to be Rs. 2,10,000 a month and the *wazir* agreed to pay this. Next the Emperor having refused to take any part in the negotiations relating to the future of the districts of Kara and Allahabad, these were resumed by the Company and assigned to the *wazir* on condition that he should pay forty-five lakhs of rupees in three instalments to the Company, this amount was later raised to fifty lakhs. A formal treaty was concluded on 7 September, 1773. The Emperor then called upon Hastings to remit to him the arrears of tribute from Bengal and to give up Kara and Allahabad but the latter politely refused to accede to any of these demands. The cession of Kara and Allahabad was the second of the charges, afterwards brought against Hastings. "Justice and generosity," declared Burke, "demanded that these two places should have been left to the Emperor," but, "such considerations were a feeble balance against.....the heavy attractions of gold." According to Macaulay "the whole transaction was one of simple and unprovoked spoliation undertaken by Hastings for the sole purpose of obtaining money." Strachey, true to the traditions of British imperialists, has made a gallant effort to justify the action of Hastings but that this action of Hastings disturbed the moral conscience of the average Britisher was evident from the reaction of the press in England.

Soon after the retirement of the Marathas and the conclusion of the Treaty of Banaras the *wazir* urged upon Hastings the desirability of settling the Rohilla

problem once and for all. The Rohillas were firmly established on the frontiers of Oudh and commanded the forts on the Ganges which gave them access to his country and their innate hostility to Oudh and their uncertain attitude in the event of the reappearance of the Marathas constituted a potential danger. According to him the only way to secure his own dominions, and thus form a blanket for the British possessions beyond, was the expulsion of the Rohillas and the occupation of their land. In reality, Shuja'-ud-Daulah was only trying to achieve the unrealised ambition of Safdar Jang. He succeeded in obtaining the concurrence of Hastings to the realisation of his ambition and the draft of a treaty was prepared by which Hastings promised to lend military assistance against payment of a sum of forty lakhs in the event of a successful occupation of the Rohilla country. The actual expedition against the Rohillas was, however, postponed but Hastings "gave the Vizir every reason to expect that whenever it could be by prudence resumed, and he (Vizir) desired it, it should be undertaken."

Encouraged by the absence of the Marathas and the domestic troubles in which they were involved after the death of Narayan Rao, Shuja'-ud-Daulah cast covetous eyes upon Etawah and other places which had been garrisoned by them but Hastings cautioned him against any such step. Later he again wrote to Hastings apprising him of the intention of the Rohillas to take possession of Etawah and of the non-payment of forty lakhs of rupees promised by them. "This I will never submit to" he wrote "and I am determined to punish them". He reiterated the conditions formerly accepted by Hastings. "On condition of the entire expulsion of the Rohillas I will pay to the Company the sum of forty lakhs of rupees in ready money whenever I shall discharge the English troops, and until the expulsion of the Rohillas I will pay the sum of Rs. 2,10,000

monthly". The Council at Calcutta approved of rendering such assistance for "the conditions if accepted would undoubtedly secure and greatest possible advantage from such an enterprise."

In November, 1773, Shuja'-ud-Daulah succeeded in securing the loan of a few pieces of heavy artillery from Hastings and marched upon Etawah, which he captured. He then entered into an engagement with Muzaffar Jang at Farrukhabad and completely detached him from the Rohillas. He also succeeded in persuading Zabita Khan to give up his intention of joining Hafiz Rahmat Khan and secured his promise to help him in the projected invasion of Rohilkhand. Through Najaf Khan, he succeeded in obtaining the Emperor's approval of his expedition and by a secret treaty he promised to pay the Emperor half the territory acquired from the Rohillas. By skilful diplomacy, Shuja'-ud-Daulah succeeded in completely isolating the Rohillas from all possible allies and then proceeded to undertake military operations against them. The Bengal government on his request now instructed Colonel Champion to assume command of the troops marching towards the *wazir's* territories for the reduction of the Rohilla country lying between the Ganges and the mountains. Champion was instructed to confine himself strictly to the military conduct of the expedition while Middleton, the English resident at Lucknow was entrusted with the management of all political relations.

While Shuja'-ud-Daulah and the British had carefully laid their plans and had assembled a formidable force, the Rohillas were disunited, disorganised and disrupted through their petty bickerings and lack of cohesion. "Notwithstanding" says Hamilton, "the very advanced age of Hafiz Rahmat Khan, he still perhaps possessed spirit and abilities sufficient to have enabled him to bear with success the great weight thrown upon his shoulders, had any tolerable degree of harmony

subsisted among the three leading members of the community but that unanimity which alone could render them formidable now no longer prevailed among them. The haughty and turbulent spirit of the Afghan could no longer submit to that strict control which was necessary to procure any tolerable degree of regularity or subordination in a government composed of so many independent members.”¹

Shuja'-ud-Daulah joined Colonel Champion near Shahabad and sent an emissary to Hafiz Rahmat Khan and made a formal demand for the sum due to him under the Treaty of 1772.

Pahar Sing, the *diwan* of Hafiz Rahmat Khan, advised him not to risk a battle, and undertook to procure the money from some *mahajans* if the Afghan *sardars* would not pay. Hafiz Rahmat Khan despairing of all assistance and not willing to subject his people to unnecessary exactions refused the offer “observing that as he must die some time, he could not fall in a better cause, than in defence of his honour and his people.” He then addressed his followers and told them that those who would willingly join him were welcome to do so, while those who would not join him were free to depart ; that he was not afraid either of the strength of the enemy or his own weakness ; if there was no one with him he would fight single-handed against Shuja'-ud-Daulah. Hafiz Rahmat Khan was right in believing that there was no possibility of an honourable settlement. In a letter written to Colonel Champion he asserted that he had faithfully observed the terms of the treaty when he had met him at Shahabad “yet has the Nawab Vizir exhibited enmity.” On 17 April Hafiz Rahmat Khan wrote again to Colonel Champion asking for “explicit information regarding his (Vizir's) present wishes.” The Colonel wrote back to say that the *wazir* had spent two crores of rupees in defence of the Rohillas and

¹ Hamilton, p. 209.

asked Rahmat to let him know immediately what he could pay. This was an exorbitant demand. As Colonel Champion observed "The Nawab claims no less than two crores of rupees and unless he greatly abates his demands it is not likely that an amicable decision can take place." Hafiz Rahmat Khan pleaded his inability to pay this amount and no alternative was left to him but to fight.

Hafiz Rahmat Khan left Bareilly for Aonla. A large number of Rajput chiefs joined Hafiz Rahmat Khan. Shuja'-ud-Daulah entered Rohilkhand through Shahabad. Hafiz Rahmat Khan then moved to Tandah and from there marched to Faridpur. Shuja'-ud-Daulah finally reached Shahjahanpur where he was welcomed by 'Abdulla Khan who rendered him all assistance and then marched to Tilhar. On 23 April, 1774 he advanced from Tilhar with a force of a lakh and fifteen thousand horse and foot and supported by the British contingent. Rahmat Khan was stationed at Katra, seven *kos* from Tilhar, when he learnt of the advance of the enemy. The battle at Katra Miranpur which was short but decisive is best described in the words of the author of *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*. "When the scouts gave notice of the approach of the enemy, Hafiz Rahmat Khan went to the tent of Faiz-ullah Khan and desired him to fight boldly so long as he (Hafiz) remained alive ; but as soon as he should fall, to make his escape to Pilibhit, and take the females of the family to the hills. Having given these instructions he mounted his horse, and with ten thousand men advanced to the front of the army, which was now within the range of the enemy's guns. The action soon became general : Mustakeem Khan advanced on the left wing, and was joined by Mohi-boola Khan with four hundred men, when they attacked the division commanded by Colonel Champion Faizoola Khan distinguished himself and took a village in the rear of the enemy, from whence he opened a destructive

fire on them and Hafiz was seen galloping about in every direction giving his orders with the most perfect coolness. At this time, Bukshee Ahmad Khan, who had already been bribed by Shooja-ood-dowla pretending that his men would not stand in so hot a fire, quitted his post, and went over to the enemy. The defection of so large a body occasioned a general panic ; many took to flight, and several of the chiefs followed the example of the Bukshee. A messenger now arrived from Mustakeem Khan, to say that he would be overpowered unless a reinforcement reached him immediately. Hafiz hastened to join him, and on the way his horse was shot under him ; another was brought, and at a little distance he met Mustakeem Khan flying before the enemy. Abid Khan now entreated Hafiz to make his escape, as the day could not be recovered but he refused to listen to this advice, and with the small remnant of his army rushed in amongst the enemy ; though wounded in several places, he continued to distribute death around him, till a cannon shot struck him in the breast and removed him to a better world.”¹

The death of Rahmat Khan was the signal for a general rout of the Afghans and their allies. Those who escaped took the road to their houses. The Rohilla camp was plundered by the Nawab-Wazir's soldiers. “We have the honour of the Day and these banditti the profit,” complained Champion.

Hafiz Rahmat Khan's body remained amongst the dead for some time. Then one Sultan Khan who had formerly been in his service and had later joined Shuja'-ud-Daulah recognised him, severed the head and took it to Shuja'-ud-Daulah. “Thus ended” says Strachey “the Rohilla dominion. Counting from the time when Ali Mohammad's power was first established to the death of Hafiz Rahmat, who nearly during the whole period was the chief personage in the state, it lasted less

¹ *Gullistan-i-Rahmat*, Elliot, p. 115-116.

than thirty five years". Hafiz Rahmat Khan was sixty-seven years of age and had governed the province of Katehr twenty seven years and some months.

Thus died one of the noblest soldiers and statesmen of India of the eighteenth century, a victim of the ambitions of Shuja'-ud-Daulah and Warren Hastings, deserted in his hour of need by his erstwhile friends, kinsmen and compatriots. "His personal bravery and firmness in the hour of danger would have enabled the Rohillas to support themselves with success against all foreign enemies, and to have protected their dominion from the many calamities in which it had been involved for several years, had he been properly supported by his colleagues, and it was this spirit that determined him, on the failure of every other recourse to prefer an honourable death to an inglorious submission."¹ From the death of 'Ali Muhammad Khan in 1749 till his own death in 1774, for nearly twenty-five years he was the binding force that knit together the loosely bound Afghan confederacy. His moderation, his cool headedness and his foresight enabled the Rohillas to withstand successfully the buffets of their enemies and to maintain the dignity and the honour of the Rohillas. Under his humane and wise rule the peasants were protected ; the artisans and craftsman were encouraged to pursue their vocations in peace and without let or hindrance ; trade and commerce flourished and many vexatious taxes upon trade were abolished. He was the author of the Persian work, *Khulasat-ul-Ansab* on the genealogy of the Afghans. Hafiz Rahmat was also a poet and amongst the books presented to M. Darmesteter there were a number of poetical compositions by Afghan chiefs, one of them being a poem by Hafiz Rahmat Khan. Hafiz Rahmat Khan had a large library which after his defeat and death was carried off by Shuja'-ud-Daulah to Lucknow.

Mustajab Khan thus sums up the character of

¹ Hamilton, p. 237.

his father : "The liberality of Hafiz Rahmat was evinced in numberless instances. Throughout his dominions he abolished taxes of every denomination, whether on exports or imports, though these imports had yielded many lakhs of rupees annually ; nor would he revive this odious demand, even when his finances were at their lowest ebb. In his various wars, the widows of those who fell in action were supported to affluence, and the sons received the pay of their deceased parents, till they were of an age to be enrolled among his troops. During the government of Ullee Mahomed Khan, all the rent-free lands formerly granted to learned and pious men, or to indigent families, had been resumed, and a small annual payment substituted ; the whole of these lands were restored by Hafiz, and numberless new pensions were granted ; in conferring which obligations, Hafiz would regret his inability to make the amount larger, and by his manner appeared to be rather receiving than conferring a favour.

"Hafiz Rahmat was of the sect of the Soonees, as indeed are all the Afghans. During the month of Ramzan he observed a strict fast, read through the whole of the Koran in private, besides hearing portions of it daily read in public ; during the last ten days of the month, all worldly concerns were laid aside and he sat in the mosque absorbed in prayer and meditation. At the Eed-ool-Fittur many thousand maunds of wheat were distributed to the poor, besides small donations in money. During thirteen days of the Mphurram, the *nobut* was not sounded, and each day bread and sherbet was distributed to every one who attended to receive it. From the 7th to the 10th of the month, all the Syyuds were assembled, when Hafiz waited on them as a servant, and with his own hands presented their food ; after which they were dismissed with suitable presents ; the same form was observed with the Sheikhs ; after which the lame and the blind, widows, and orphans, were

amply supplied from his store-house, and called down blessings on his head. From the 1st to the 12th of the month Robbee-ool-awul, the poor and needy received a similar daily supply. So strict was Hafiz in his observance of the precepts of the prophet regarding liquors, or intoxicating drugs, that he would not even allow himself the indulgence of eating *paun* or any spices, or of smoking a *kullian*, nor would he wear silken clothing. It was his daily practice to rise three hours before the sun, and after ablution, to commence his devotions. Kneeling with his face turned towards Mecca, he first read a portion of the Koran and then some other devotional work, till the day broke, at which time he repaired to the mosque, and continued his devotions till sunrise. At that hour he went to the Deewan-Aum, to give order respecting the government of the country, and to receive the petitions of all those who had to complain of any grievance; at two hours after sunrise, the third prayers were offered up in the Deewan-Khas, after which the reports received from the several Aumils were read, and the necessary orders were issued. At noon he made his principal meal, then took a short repose; and when three hours of the day remained, he offered up his fourth prayer and returned to business, which occupied him till near sunset, when the fifth act of devotion was observed in the presence of, and in concert with all the holy and learned men of the town, with whom he conversed on religious topics till dark; and this was the time for the sixth prayer. When three hours of the night were passed, he partook of a second meal in a select society, and all poor children were at that time admitted to his house and received a supply of food. At midnight the party broke up, and he retired to rest.

“It is not surprising that a ruler who studied so little his own ease, whose whole life was spent in performing his duty to his God and to his fellow creatures should

have been beloved in life, and regretted in death; indeed his fall caused a general mourning throughout Kutheir."

No other episode in Indian History has caused so much bitter and acrimonious controversy as the Rohilla War. It is a misnomer to call it a war; it was a massacre on a grand scale. The armies of the *wazir* and the English with the contingents of other Afghan officers whom Shuja'-ud-Daulah had succeeded in seducing from their duty to their nation and loyalty to their chief, were more than a match for the gallant little army that Hafiz Rahmat Khan had been able to collect. After his death the leadership of the Rohillas devolved on Faiz-ullah Khan the eldest surviving son of 'Ali Muhammad Khan. He fled with the remains of the army to Rampur and then took refuge in Laldaung, a strongly situated post at the foot of the Garhwal mountains. Within a month Colonel Champion reported that the whole of the Rohilla country was in the *wazir's* possession. One after the other important towns and *parganahs* of the Rohillas—Aonla, Bareilly, Pilibhit—were captured. Villages were burnt, children were killed, women were violated; places of worship desecrated and the helpless Rohillas hunted from place to place till they were compelled to retire beyond the Ganges. The extirpation of the Rohillas was complete and all resistance or hope of revival was destroyed. When an appeal was made to Hastings to take the family of Rahmat under British protection Hastings replied, "To take the family of Hafiz Rahmat immediately under our protection would furnish him with a just plea to refuse his compliance with the stipulation made for the present service as it would be in effect to conquer the country for the Company and not for him." In the same way the pathetic appeal made by the wife of Hafiz Rahmat Khan went unheeded.

Faiz-ullah Khan from his retreat opened negotiations with the commander of the English forces and the *wazir* for the restoration of the whole of Rohilkhand in return

for a payment of eighty lakhs of rupees, but the *wazir* 'rejected them all with the greatest disdain' and Hastings would not listen for a moment to Faiz-ullah Khan's offer. An army was sent against Faiz-ullah Khan and on 7 October 1774 a treaty was concluded between the *wazir* and Faiz-ullah Khan. The latter was allowed to retain possession of the territory formerly allotted to him in Rohilkhand by his father 'Ali Muhammad Khan, with the city and district of Rampur.

The fall of the Rohillas was the beginning of the end of the independence of Oudh. Shuja'-ud-Daulah had entered the spider's web and there was no getting out.

The weight of modern opinion is against Warren Hasting's unjustified aggression against the Rohillas. The verdict of Torrens is a fitting epilogue to this dismal episode.

"We had not the slightest pretence of quarrel with the Rohillas. We had not even a colourable complaint against them. Rohilkhand was rather a defence to our newly acquired provinces, and its commerce and agriculture nourished ours. But money was wanted to meet exorbitant salaries and charges, and the Governor-General made up his mind to pay the usury of blood. He accepted the money from Oude, and hired the Company's troops to the Vizir, to seize and expropriate Rohilkhand. The liberties and lives of a friendly race were the price of the subsidy. He well knew the bravery of the people he was engaging to hunt down, and the misery, violence and desolation to which he was devoting them. He was remonstrated with by Champion, who offered to throw up his command, and the most touching deprecations came from the unfortunate Rohilla chiefs. But the Viceroy was inexorable. Not a single stipulation was made as to the use to which the British troops were to be put, or the severities they might be called

upon to execute. They were placed unconditionally at the disposal of the Vizier, the word was given and the doom of a gallant race was sealed. Hastings pocketed £ 20,000 as a private present for signing the treaty, and the public treasury was replenished to the extent of £ 400,000."

CHAPTER XI

STRUGGLE IN BENGAL

During the first half of the eighteenth century, when the Mughul Empire had begun to decline, Bengal remained free from turmoil and enjoyed comparative peace and material prosperity under the able rule of Murshid Quli and 'Ali Vardi Khan. Moreover from the end of Emperor 'Alamgir's reign till the time of 'Ali Vardi Khan, it was mainly the revenue of Bengal, remitted with great regularity which sustained the throne of Delhi. The statesman responsible for restoring order in the finances of Bengal and giving a new lease of life to the Delhi Empire was Murshid Quli Khan.

Murshid Quli was a Brahmin by birth having been sold to Haji Shafi' Isfahani, twice *diwan* of Emperor 'Almagir. After the death of his master, 'Almagir assigned to Murshid Quli, then Kartalab Khan, the *diwani* of the Deccan in 1698. Two years later, he was appointed *diwan* of Bengal under Prince 'Azim-ush-Shan, its *subahdar* (1697-1712). After this he held several other offices, being made, in addition, *diwan* of Orissa (1701), deputy *subahdar* of the same province in 1703 and *diwan* of Bihar in 1704. Murshid Quli could not establish harmonious relations with the extravagant prince and, following an abortive attempt at his murder made by the agents of the prince at Dacca, he shifted the *diwani* to Maqsudabad, renamed Murshidabad, which had the advantage of a central situation in addition to its distance from the prince's headquarters. Censured by the Emperor for his undignified conduct, the prince himself moved to Patna, renamed 'Azimabad, after leaving his son Prince Farrukh-Siyar as the deputy *subahdar* of Bengal. For about two years (1708-10) Murshid

Quli remained out of office owing to the intrigues of the prince, but in 1710 he was re-appointed *diwan* of Bengal by Emperor Bahadur Shah I. In 1713 he was appointed deputy *subahdar* of Bengal by Jahandar Shah and in 1714 *subahdar* of Orissa with the title of Ja'far Khan. In 1717 he was made the *subahdar* of Bengal with the title of *Mu'tamin-ul-Mulk 'Ala-ud-Daulah Nasir-i-Nasir Jang*.

Murshid Quli Khan re-established an orderly administration in Bengal, brought about economy in expenditure, reduced the power of the *zamindars* and the profit of the farmers of government revenues, saved the peasantry from illegal imposts and ensured general prosperity by encouraging foreign trade and extending cultivation by the reclamation of unproductive lands. When he assumed the *diwani* the bulk of the revenue came from the customs. The revenue from agriculture was small, the larger portion being consumed by the *jagirs*. He took away the *jagirs* and paid cash salaries instead. He himself examined the accounts of the Exchequer and was strict in realizing the revenue from the *zamindars*.

He ascertained the total area of cultivable land through a survey and prepared a statement of their revenue yields on the basis of the figures of yield per unit. He effected an economy in administration by cutting down his army to a bare 2000 cavalry and 4000 infantry. Yet this small force, though insufficient to guard the frontiers against external enemies, was found sufficient to enforce the payment of all revenues of Bengal ; he established his authority so well that it was sufficient for him to send a single messenger to sequester a *zamindar* or to seize a distant culprit. In the affairs of the government, he always rewarded merit whenever he found it. He abolished the trade monopoly of high officials.

Murshid Quli Khan gave every encouragement to foreign merchants because they brought large revenues

to the treasury through their trade. He did not allow the customs officers to realize more than the customary $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. from the Muslim merchants. The English merchants were in an advantageous position owing to their practically duty-free trade; they paid a nominal sum of Rs. 3000 annually in lieu of taxes. Their fortified factories were a source of danger to the State. Therefore he rescinded the privileges granted to the English by Prince Shuja' and Emperor 'Alamgir and made them pay the same duty as was payable by the other merchants. The English resented this and deputed, with the consent of the Directors, a mission to the court of Emperor Farrukh-Siyar at Delhi under the leadership of Hedges, governor of Calcutta. After staying for about two years the mission succeeded in getting concessions from the Emperor through generous distribution of bribes and the professional skill of one Dr. Hamilton, a member of the mission, in curing the Emperor of a malady. A *farman* was secured from the Emperor to the effect that :—

- (1) A "*dastak*" or permit signed by the president of Calcutta would exempt the goods it specified from being stopped or examined by the officials of the Nawab under any pretext;
- (2) That persons indebted to the Company whether Europeans or Indians shall be delivered to the presidency on demand;
- (3) That the officers of the Murshidabad mint shall allow three days a week for the minting of the Company's *sikka*;
- (4) That the English purchase the lordship of 38 villages on the same conditions as their earlier purchase of the villages of Kalighat, Chhutanati and Govindpur.

The Nawab, however, ignored the *farman* and made null by ordering the owners of the villages concerned

against the sale of their lands to the English. The Nawab further held that the *dastak* did not apply to internal trade. The Company abided by the decisions of the Nawab. The remnant of the concessions in favour of the English increased the volume of their trade. Even private merchants began to be licensed by the Company. The importance of Calcutta increased rapidly and in a short time it began to attract a large population consisting of the Portuguese, Armenian, Muslim and Hindu merchants who carried their commerce under the protection of the English flag. Many merchants amassed huge fortunes. The president of Calcutta council nevertheless found it prudent to conciliate the Nawab by frequent presents to facilitate business in subordinate factories and ensure security to English investments. Murshid Quli suppressed lawlessness and robbery with a strong hand and secured the safety of highways by the erection of guard-houses. He made confidential enquiries about market prices and in case of short supply of food and grain in any locality, he broke open the hoards of individuals and compelled them to carry their grain to the public markets. Murshid Quli Khan despised luxury, took no delight in hunting, did not indulge in the company of dancers and concubines and would not allow any strange woman or eunuch to enter his seraglio. He was himself learned and paid great respect to men of piety and erudition. He was a fair calligraphist as well. His skill in accounting enabled him to scrutinize all the accounts himself. He was a brave soldier and a steady protector of the weak. "Excepting Shaista Khan," says the annalist¹ "there has not appeared in Bengal nor indeed any part of Hindustan, an Amir who can be compared with Murshid Quli for the zeal in the propagation of the Faith, for wisdom in the establishment of laws and regulations, for munificence and liberality.....for rigid

¹ J. N. Sarkar, *History of Bengal*, II, 420.

and impartial justice, in redressing wrongs and punishing offenders ; in short, whose administration so much tended to the benefit of mankind and the glory of the Creator."

Hearing the news of Murshid Quli's illness his son-in-law Shuja'-ud-din Muhammad, already governor of Orissa, marched upon Murshidabad, which he reached and seized soon after Murshid Quli Khan's death. He seated himself on the *masnad* of Bengal and received the allegiance of the nobles and of Murshid Quli's son, Sarfaraz Khan, who had been nominated his successor by the deceased Khan. The Emperor confirmed his succession as governor of Bengal and conferred upon him a *mansab* of 7000 and the additional title of *Mu'tamin-ul-Mulk Shuja'-ud-Daulah Asad Jang Bahadur*. Shuja'-ud-din inaugurated a mild but just administration. The province, as a whole, was well administered and prices of commodities became ludicrously cheap under his administration. Rice could be had at eight maunds a rupee. The revenues payable to the Emperor were remitted with great regularity through Jagat Seth, the Murshidabad banker. The refractory *zamindars* of Bihar were successfully suppressed by 'Ali Vardi Khan and the Hindu *zamindars* of Dinajpur and Kuch-Bihar or Birbhum were reduced to loyalty by Sayyid Ahmad, the *faujdar* of Rangpur. Mir Habib launched an expedition against Tipperah, subjugated it and appointed Aqa Sadiq as its *faujdar*.

During his reign, the commercial activities of the (Austrian) Ostend Company, who had their factories at *Banki Bazar*, 15 miles from Calcutta, came to an end because of the jealousy of the English and Dutch merchants who attacked and levelled down those factories in 1733 with the connivance of the Nawab. His authority could not be questioned by foreign merchants including the English, the Dutch and the French, who had to pay, from

time to time, large sums of money as fines for illegal practices.

On Shuja'-ud-din's death (1733), his son, Sarfaraz stepped into the *masnad* of Bengal in accordance with his father's nomination. Sarfaraz Khan was a youth of low morals, lacking strength of character and addicted to sensual pleasures. He weakened his position by striking coins in the name of Nadir Shah on the latter's entry into Delhi in 1739. A conspiracy to dethrone him was hatched in his court by 'Ali Vardi's brother, Haji Ahmad, who was the chief *diwan*, Alam Chand the *diwani-i-khalsah* and Jagat Seth, the banker. The conspirators secretly instigated 'Ali Vardi Khan, who had consolidated his position in Bihar as its governor, to invade Bengal. In 1740 'Ali Vardi marched upon Bengal. Sarfaraz met the invaders and fought against them bravely at Teliagarhi, described by historians as Panipat of Bengal. He was killed in the battle. 'Ali Vardi installed himself on the Bengal *masnad* and secured the recognition of the imperial court by sending costly presents to the Emperor. He was invested with a rank of 7000 *zat* and *sawar* and the high-sounding title of *Shuja'-ul-Mulk Husam-ud-Daulah 'Ali Vardi Khan Mahabat Jang*.

'Ali Vardi Khan, formerly called Mirza Muhammad 'Ali, was a descendant of a Turco-Arab family. His grandfather, an Arab by birth, was a *mansabdar* of 'Alamgir. His father Mirza Muhammad enlisted himself in the service of A'zam Shah, third son of Emperor 'Alamgir. Mirza Muhammad 'Ali who was born in the Deccan had a Turkish mother of the Afshar tribe, related to Shuja'-ud-din Muhammad Khan. In 1728, long after the migration of his father to Orissa, Mirza Mohammad 'Ali, while holding the deputy governorship of Orissa, was made the *faujdar* of Rajmahal and honoured with the title of 'Ali Vardi Khan in recognition of his services to Shuja'-ud-din. His elder brother Haji Ahmad

remained at Murshidabad as the councillor of Shuja'-ud-din. Haji Ahmad's eldest son, Muhammad Riza, was appointed *bakhshi* of the troops and the superintendent of Murshidabad customs. His second son Muhammad Sajid got the *faujdari* of Rangpur. The third son, Muhammad Hashim, too, was given a *mansab*.

In 1733 Muhammad 'Ali was given the deputy *subahdari* of Bihar with the title of *Mahabat Jang* and a *mansab* of 5000. In the last capacity he succeeded in suppressing the recalcitrant *zamindars* and the free-booting *banjaras* terrorising the different parts of Bihar. It was from Bihar that he captured the *masnad* of Bengal, as has been narrated earlier.

'Ali Vardi soon succeeded in winning wide support by his tact and lavish distribution of money and offices. He secured recognition of his authority by winning over Zamir-ud-din the imperial *bakhshi*. 'Ali Vardi strengthened his position by distributing most of the key offices among his near relatives. Thus his nephew and son-in-law Nawazish Muhammad Khan was made *diwan-i-khalisah* and deputy governor of Dacca. The deputy governorship of Bihar went to his youngest nephew and son-in-law, Zamir-ud-din Muhammad, and Sayyid Ahmad Khan was made governor of Tirhut. Mir Ja'far 'Ali Khan, a brother-in-law of 'Ali Vardi was made *bakhshi* of the army; Chain Rai Rai-ayan was made *diwan* after the death of 'Alam Chand.

Rustam Jang, son-in-law of Shuja'-ud-din and deputy governor of Orissa having refused to recognise his usurpation of the throne, 'Ali Vardi marched upon Orissa. Rustam Jang was defeated near Phulwari, four miles from Balasore town. But it was in a second expedition launched with Maratha aid that Orissa was finally subjugated.

The Marathas proved troublesome. They invaded Bengal in the spring of 1742 under the leadership of Bhasker Pandit, a general of Raghoji Bhonsla, raja of Nagpur and Berar. 'Ali Vardi having come to intercept

them, found himself encircled at Katwa near Burdwan. Their armies looted the country-side for nearly forty miles around. With the greatest difficulty 'Ali Vardi succeeded in breaking the Maratha cordon and reached in time to save Murshidabad, a part of which had already been plundered. The Marathas kept a garrison at Katwa under Mir Habib, an adherent of Shuja'-ud-din's family. The country from Rajmahal to Midnapur, practically the whole area west of the Ganges, fell to the Marathas. Sheshrao was installed as the governor and Mir Habib was made the *diwan*. A number of people affected by the raids sought asylum in Calcutta. It was on this occasion that the English were permitted to fortify this settlement by digging a ditch, and raising a brick wall round their Qasimbazar settlement.

In the territories occupied by the Marathas, wanton destruction and horrible outrages were committed. All who could, tried to save themselves by flight but few were able to make good their escape; most of them fell into the hands of prowling bands of Maratha horsemen who deprived them of all their valuables. Some were tortured and mutilated to disclose their hidden wealth, beautiful women were assaulted. After looting the open countryside, they swooped upon villages, inflicting inhuman torture upon women and children. They made no distinction between men and women, infants or adults; even Brahmins and the destitute suffered. The entire country-side was devastated. Its condition can best be imagined when we bear in mind that bands upon bands of raiders came to the same spot and tortured men and women when they had nothing left to quench their thirst for looting. The Maratha terror is still remembered in folk lore. A lullaby, still extant, says,

"The child has slept, the village is quiet.

The *bargis*¹ have come to devastate
the country. The nightingales have eaten
the paddy, with what shall we pay the rent?"

¹ I.e. Maratha horsemen.

These raids seriously crippled the economy of the province. Agriculture, trade and industry were severely affected by the flight of artisans and peasants. A scarcity of food-grains followed producing famine conditions.

After collecting reinforcements 'Ali Vardi fell upon the Marathas at Katwa (1742) when Bhaskar Pandit was celebrating *Durga Puja* on a lavish scale after levying a forced contribution on the *zamindars*. The Marathas fled with precipitate haste to Midnapur and then to Orissa with the Bengali troops close on their heels. 'Ali Vardi drove them beyond the Orissa border and recovered Cuttack.

Early in 1743, Raghuji Bhonsla deputed Bhaskar Pandit to Bengal to levy *chauth* from the province in accordance with a commission granted by Raja Shahu in favour of Raghuji. The Peshwa who looked upon Raghuji as a rival, came to Bengal in pursuance of an appeal made to him by Muhammad Shah, Emperor of Delhi, to stop Raghuji's men. The Peshwa entered Bihar with his forces and appeared in Bengal along the Jharkhand, looting and slaughtering all the way. At a meeting with the Peshwa near Murshidabad it was agreed that the Nawab would pay the *chauth* of Bengal to Shahu plus a sum of twenty-two lakhs to Peshwa Balaji to cover expenses incurred by his army, provided he freed Bengal from the ravages of Raghuji's horsemen. The Peshwa then drove away Raghuji's bands beyond the borders of Orissa. This gave Bengal a nine month's respite. Bhaskar Pandit reappeared in 1744 at a time when the treasury was well nigh exhausted in fighting or buying off the Marathas and 'Ali Vardi's army was on the verge of exhaustion. Making up his mind to fight the Marathas, by means fair or foul, he entrapped the Maratha leaders on the pretext of negotiating terms of settlement and killed them all with the exception of one and put their leaderless army to head-long flight.

This measure gave peace for the next fifteen months till a fresh invasion was launched following the revolt of Mustafa Khan, the commander of the Nawab's Pathan troops in Bihar. Mustafa being defeated by the Nawab, his retreating bands joined the Marathas who had reappeared in Orissa. After entering Bengal the Marathas suffered a decisive defeat at the hands of Ja'far 'Ali Khan (Mir Ja'far) and dispersed. The Marathas retreated but doubled back into Bengal practising all the way their pastime of loot. They were again defeated by 'Ali Vardi at Katwa and driven into Orissa in 1745. The Marathas continued coming in 1746 and 1747 in spite of defeats. In 1747, taking advantage of the confusion caused in the eastern province by the news of the entry of Ahmad Shah Abdali in the Panjab, the Pathan rebels attacked Bihar, captured Patna, slew Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan and tortured to death Haji Ahmad. 'Ali Vardi marched upon Bihar and defeated the Marathas and the Afghans separately and released the deputy Nawab's family who had been captured by the Marathas. Bihar was saved but Orissa could not be recovered. Exhausted by ceaseless military operations in his old age, 'Ali Vardi consented to a treaty with the Marathas (1751) with the following terms : Mir Habib, the Maratha puppet, would remain the deputy governor of Orissa on behalf of the Nawab and pay *chauth* to the raja of Nagpur ; and that an amount of twenty-two lakhs of rupees would be paid annually to the Marathas as the *chauth* of Bengal.

A year later, Mir Habib was murdered and Orissa was assigned to Muslih-ud-din, a courtier of Raghuji and thus Orissa became a Maratha province. The menace over, 'Ali Vardi reduced the number of his troops.¹

¹ K. K. Datta, *Alivardi and his Times*, p. 164.

'Ali Vardi compared the European merchants to a beehive whose honey was to be enjoyed as long as the bees were not disturbed and consequently his conduct towards them was fair, just and paternal. But under the pressure of troubles and needs he could exact money from them on several occasions on the ground that whoever enjoyed the benefits of trade in his province should also share in the expenses incurred in its defence. He brought pressure to bear upon the English merchants for their illegal trade and made them pay Rs. 36,500 for their Qasimbazar establishments and Rs. 8,000 for Patna in addition to the payment of an annual rent of Rs. 4,500. In 1748, they were made to pay Rs. 125,000 for their unauthorised seizure of goods belonging to local merchants. He also prevented the European merchants from fighting in his territories, and when the War of Austrian Succession was being fought between the English and the French in the Deccan, he forbade the English the fortification of their settlements. In other respects the Europeans were not molested and were permitted to carry on their trade according to the *farmans*. The Dutch, the Danes and the French carried on their trade in peace. It is said that he paid no attention to the proposal put forward by his army chief Mustafa Khan that the English be driven away from Bengal. Yet quite a large number of his Hindu officers harboured discontent and were secretly planning to overthrow the dynasty. "But as long as the strong hand of 'Ali Vardi held the reins of power, this smouldering discontent could not take the shape of an over action."¹

The Nawab's last years were unhappy, caused by a series of domestic bereavements. In 1752 died his grandson Ikram-ud-Daulah adopted by the childless Shahamat Jang.² Shahamat too overpowered with grief died of dropsy in December, 1755. To add to his grief

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

² *Styar*, II, 595; *Muzaffarnamah*, 1755.

Saulat Jang (Sayyid Ahmad Khan) followed his brother in February, 1756.

'Ali Vardi died of dropsy at the ripe old age of eighty on April 10, 1756,¹ after exhorting his grandson and successor (Siraj-ud-Daulah) to devote his attention to the suppression of crimes, and the well-being of his subjects. "If you take the ways of malice and hostility," said the Nawab, "the garden of prosperity will wither away."

Trained in the school of adversity, 'Ali Vardi developed a puritanic temperament. According to Orme he kept no seraglio and lived with one wife. He had no taste for alcohol or for musical entertainment and dancing girls. He had an intense faith in God.² According to the author of the *Siyar*, he had no equal in generalship except Asaf Jah, Nizam-ul-Mulk. He was a kind and generous master and never forgot his benefactor. He patronized letters, arts and crafts.³ After the Maratha raids which had confined his energies for the first eleven years of his rule to military affairs, he threw himself with rare earnestness into the amelioration of the devastation by reconstructing roads, bridges, towns and villages and patronizing agriculture and industries. He was a tactful and sober governor who tried to infuse spirit and vigour into every branch of his administration.⁴

Siraj-ud-Daulah who had been declared heir⁵ in 1753 ascended the *māsnad* of Bengal on 10 April, 1756. His succession to the throne was not undisputed. He was the son of Amina, the youngest daughter of 'Ali Vardi; Ghasiti the eldest was childless and Akram her adopted son had died in 1752; Ghasiti who would have been content to rule the country as the regent of Akram, opposed Siraj. Mir Ja'far Khan, the *bakhshi*

¹ *Siyar*, II, 608.

² K. K. Datta, *Alivardi and his Times*, p. 170.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 173-74.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁵ Stewart, *History of Bengal*, p. 267.

of the army was secretly hostile to Siraj and was in conspiracy with Shaukat Jang, son of Saulat Jang of Purnia, who openly challenged the legality of Siraj's claim to the *masnad* and was intriguing with the Nawab-Wazir of Oudh to secure a patent in his own name. The condition of the Delhi Empire had become so desperate that it is doubtful if confirmation of Siraj-ud-Daulah's accession was even sought. Siraj promptly occupied the Moti Jhil palace, the residence of Ghasiti with all its hoarded wealth, and removed Mir Ja'far from the bakhshi-ship of the army.

Siraj's departure for Purnia was postponed when his attention was drawn to the conduct of the English in Calcutta. In the first place Roger Drake, the governor of Calcutta, had neither felicitated Siraj at his accession nor had he sent presents to the Nawab. The ill will between the Nawab and the English was due to the fact that Drake gave asylum to Krishna Ballabh, son of Raj Ballabh, deputy governor of Dacca and head of naval establishments. Raj Ballabh being accused of embezzlement was thrown in confinement in Murshidabad and officers were sent to Dacca to check his accounts. Krishna Ballabh, his son, slipped to Calcutta with all the cash he could carry after bribing Drake. Objecting to the conduct of the English, the Nawab sent Narayandas as his agent to Calcutta with letters and *pan* as a token of his friendly gesture.¹ In spite of the Nawab's authorization, Narayandas was turned out of Calcutta on the charge of being a spy. A third factor contributing to bad blood was that the English were raising fortifications around Calcutta without the Nawab's permission. Enraged at the news of the insult to his agent, and the open defiance of his authority, the Nawab first seized their Qasimbazar factory and then advanced upon Calcutta on June 16. The garrison under command of Captain Minchen decided to resist. On June 18, the

¹ Cf. Letter of M. Bousset, head of Chandernagar Factory.

English batteries were silenced by heavy cannonade. On the same date the English women and children escaped aboard a ship. On the 19th, Roger Drake, the governor, fled from the town taking with him the Company's records and treasures. The English refugees took shelter in the Falta island, further downstream. After the flight of Drake the English garrison in the fort chose Mr. Holwell as governor. The evacuation of the fort decided upon at first by the defenders could not be carried out because the Nawab's troops maintained a heavy barrage of fire. On June 20 the attack on the fort started and the English with 25 of their effectives killed and 70 wounded hoisted the white flag. Some of the garrison, having broken open the winecellars, the soldiers intoxicated themselves by heavy drinking and forced open the locked gate on the river side with a view to fly. As they opened the gate, the Nawab's troops entered. No resistance was offered, no prisoners were taken. The Portuguese and the Americans were allowed to go, and many Europeans including Englishmen walked out of the fort and entered Hugli. On the 22nd, the Nawab accompanied by Mir Ja'far, whom he restored to command, entered the fort and ordered Omichand and Krishna Ballabh to be brought before him. He treated them with civility. He gave three interviews to Mr. Holwell, and each time dismissed him with the assurance of safety. The Nawab's troops plundered the effects belonging to the English but never maltreated them. But at about nightfall the English garrison, having attacked the guards, the Nawab gave orders for the confinement of the misbehaving soldiers in the prison house of the fort till the next morning. When its gate was opened next morning only 23 out of 146 prisoners were found alive, the rest having died of heat, overcrowding and wounds. This is the version of English historians mainly based on the letters of Holwell.

On his way back to Murshidabad, the Nawab handed over his prisoners to the French at Chandernagar with instructions to send them to Madras. Siraj changed the name of Calcutta to Alinagar and left it in the charge of Manikchand, the *faujdar* of Hugli.

The statement that 123 Englishmen died in the "Black Hole" is "manifestly an exaggeration." The actual number would be very much smaller than this. Neither can we say that the Nawab was responsible for it, because he had passed only a general order for the confinement of misbehaving prisoners in the correction house of their own fort. To say the least, our authorities for the so-called "Black-Hole", Holwell and Mill are utterly unreliable. Holwell in his four letters gives different numbers of prisoners and survivors. He was deliberately lying when he said that Mrs. Carcy was not released because "of her youth and beauty". In his first letter he found 16 survivors, in his second 23. Many were listed by him (including Drake) as prisoners who had earlier escaped to safety. Then again according to an article in *London Chronicle*, June 7, 1757, and Scot's *Diary* 1757, Mill who claims himself to have been a prisoner and a survivor fled by boat. Clive in his letters to Emperor Shah 'Alam complains that all prisoners were killed. Holwell speaks of 170 prisoners which number he corrects after seeing 110 Englishmen convalescing in the French hospital at Chandernagar. It appears that many Englishmen whose whereabouts could not be ascertained after the capture of Calcutta were listed as 'Black Hole' victims. Then rises the question of the accommodation of 146 prisoners in a room measuring 18' x 14' x 10'. This point was raised by Mr. Walsh, Head Master of Murshidabad High School and experimented by Mr. Bhola Nath, a *zamindar*, who fenced a space of that dimension with bamboos and asked his tenants to get in. It could not contain 146. Out of the 250 troops assembled by Drake for the

defence of Calcutta about 53 had fled in his company. Before Drake's flight on the 19th some Englishmen must have died in the defensive fight. Of 170 left 20 were killed and 70 wounded on the 20th. Some died by drowning, according to Watts and Colet 50 troopers died fighting in the ramparts and 56 Dutch troopers had deserted to the Nawab. Quite a good number escaped by walking. Taking all things into consideration the conclusion is that a handful of English garrison was left to be put in the 'Black Hole' and an inflated number was given out by Englishmen to rouse their countrymen to the frenzy of a face-saving war. Taking all these facts into consideration, 146 Englishmen could not have been left in Siraj's custody. It is nowhere admitted that a list of prisoners was made or a counting of heads done. According to Jadunath Sarkar¹ the correct number was near about sixty. About half that number seems to be nearer the truth.

After the operations against the English, Siraj had to secure his position by marching against Shaukat Jang of Purnia who had meantime obtained a patent from Ghazi-ud-din, the Nawab-Wazir for the *subahdari* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Assuming the title of '*Alam Panah*' he had written an insolent letter asking Siraj to vacate the *masnad*. Shaukat Jang was defeated and killed in a battle fought at Motihari on October 10, 1756. Soon after this, Siraj obtained recognition of his position as the *subahdar* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from the Emperor.

The English were not cowed down by this defeat ; they surprised the Nawab when they reappeared in Calcutta with troops from Madras and a fleet of seven warships and two transports in December 1756 under Clive, Watson and Eyre Coote. After capturing the southern out-posts of the river on 2 January, 1757, Calcutta was captured by naval bombardment. On the

¹ *History of Bengal*, D.U. II, 477.

3rd Clive and Watson declared war on the Nawab, on the 10th Hugli was bombarded, occupied and given over to plunder. On the 19th the Nawab reached Hugli and the English fell back on Calcutta. On February 3 Siraj came to Calcutta with about 100,000 cavalry and infantry and 30 guns as against 711 European infantry men, 100 artillery men with 14 pieces of cannon and 1,300 native troops. On the 5th Clive launched a surprise night attack on the Nawab' camp with nearly 2000 troops of all description.

The attack miscarried due to heavy fog and the English lost 97 killed, 137 wounded and 2 guns. They, however, succeeded in re-entering the fort. The Nawab, perturbed by the news of the entry of Ahmad Shah Abdali into Delhi opened negotiations through Omichand and Jagat Seth, a Jain banker, for a treaty which was signed on June 21, 1756. The Nawab agreed to restore treaty rights to the English and compensated them for the loss suffered by the Company and their dependents. The English were allowed to re-fortify Calcutta and send Mr. Watts, the head of their Qasimbazar factory, to reside in Murshidabad. The treaty however proved a mere truce. Clive hastened to attack Chandernagar on the pretext that war had broken out between the English and French in Europe, but ostensibly for detaching the French from becoming the possible allies of the Nawab. The garrison fought heroically and surrendered on February 14 only when 200 of their defenders had been killed. The Nawab could not oppose the English attack on Chandernagar for he did not like to entangle himself with the English when an attack on the eastern provinces by Ahmad Shah Abdali was apprehended. Already at this time, a conspiracy was hatching at Murshidabad in the house of Mehtab Rai Jagat Seth for dethroning Siraj. The principal factors were Rai Durlabh, Jagat Seth, Mir Ja'far and Yar Lutf, a commandant of 2000

troops paid by the *seth*. Watts gave shape to the plot by secretly meeting the conspirators, being borne in a covered *palki* in the guise of a woman. It was arranged in the form of an offensive and defensive treaty that Siraj would be deposed and Mir Ja'far installed instead. Mir Ja'far bound himself not to erect any defence beyond Hugli and recognize English sovereignty in the vicinity of Calcutta, grant territories for the maintenance of the English army and keep an English resident at his court. Mir Ja'far put his signature on it and undertook to implement it. On June 11 the treaty was delivered to Calcutta council for approval and next day Watts fled from Murshidabad.

Accusing the Nawab of the violation of the February treaty by encouraging the French (the Nawab had taken M. Jean Law and his party under his protection and had instructed him to wait at Bhagalpur) Clive began his march upon Murshidabad on June 13 with more than three thousand men including 800 European and half-caste gunners. Eyre Coote captured Kalwa commanding the high road to Murshidabad and 35 miles from the capital. Clive at first refused to proceed further and hazard a war on the assurance of the conspirators, but an hour later changed his mind and crossed the Ganges against the decision of the council. He arrived at the mango grove called *Lakh Bagh* and encamped there at midnight. The Nawab had encamped at Plassey the previous day with 50 thousand troops, of whom 12 thousand were under the command of loyal generals like Mir Madan, Mohan Lal and Bahadur Khan. The English troops had good cover under tall trees and the earthen embankment of the grove provided breast work protection to the gunners. On the western side at a distance of about 150 yards flowed the Ganges. Forty-five French gunners under M. Singray constituted the Nawab's vanguard armed with 4 light guns. Of the twelve thousand effectives of the Nawab 5000 constituted

cavally, the rest infantry, Rajput and Pathans. Outside the combat line stood the conspirators Rai Durlabh, Yar Lutf and Mir Ja'far. Siraj had 53 field pieces of heavy calibre—24 pounders and 18 pounders—each hauled by 40 to 50 oxen in front and an elephant from behind. The Nawab's troops stood in an area two miles in length almost encircling the English and threatening them with annihilation. The English army (a little over 3000 whites and non-whites) had 8 light field guns (six pounders) and two howitzers hauled by *lashkar* and operated by 150 men, and commanded by Major Kirkpatrick, Archibald Grant, Eyre Coote and others. The battle flared up at 8 A.M. on 23 June, with heavy cannonade from both sides. In half an hour the English, whose guns were out of range, lost 30 men and Clive sent his troops back to the grove. Three hours passed in gun warfare without any loss of either party. At about 11 A.M. a heavy thunderstorm accompanied by a swift shower burst forth soaking the battle-field and reducing it to a marsh. This put out of commission the Nawab's artillery, drenching its exposed gunpowder. When rains ceased, Mir Madan launched a heavy attack intending to sweep the English by superiority of numbers. But the rapid and concentrated fire from the English guns caused havoc, and killed Mir Madan and Bahadur Khan, the commander of the musketeers, and a few others. The advance was checked and the Nawab's troops began to retreat to their entrenchment in the camp. Clive launched a full attack with all arms upon the retreating mass of men and bullocks. The morale of the troops sank low on the rumour of a treachery. The sight of Mir Madan dying before the Nawab disheartened him. He called Mir Ja'far to his camp and putting his turban on his feet beseeched him to save his honour. Mir Ja'far swore his loyalty to the Nawab and advised him to call back his troops to camp and resume fighting next morning with redoubled vigour. He promised

to lend his support in driving the English from the battle-field. Mir Ja'far immediately sent a letter to Clive assuring him of his adherence to the terms of the treaty and advised an immediate attack on the Nawab's troops. The French gunners stopped the English advance for a time. The Rajputs and Pathans turned round and fought with dry powder from the camps. But the troops were without any leader and the ground conditions were unfavourable to the manœuvring of heavy equipment. Mir Ja'far and his band of conspirators withdrew from the battle-field further and further. The Nawab's troops were literally mown down by concentrated fire at short range. The Nawab's troops finally left the field leaving all their field pieces behind. The Nawab who ought to have stayed behind to inspire his men to a last struggle fled from the battle-field at about 4.00 P.M. on the back of a swift camel and reached Murshidabad in the evening (22 June). By 5.00 P.M. all was over. Among the wounded were Mohan Lal, Manik Chand and Khwajah Hadi. Clive instead of halting to plunder the Nawab's camp marched upon Murshidabad. There was no carnage which generally follows a war of attrition.

To whatever extent may Mir Ja'far be blamable for his treachery, the fact stands crystal clear that three thousand European troops had defeated twelve thousand Bengali troops armed with superior weapons. It was a victory of the strategy and discipline of Europeans and European trained troops over an overwhelming number of native troops using eastern methods of warfare. It was the fructification of the enterprise first undertaken by Dupleix in the Carnatic wars.

Mir Ja'far arrived at Murshidabad in the morning of the 24th. But Siraj perplexed at his betrayal and not daring to put his confidence in anybody did not make any effort for the defence of Murshidabad. He left Murshidabad at midnight of the 24th with his wife Lutfunnisa and his four years old daughter (Amtuz

Zahra), reached Bhagwangola near Qasimbazar on the Padma on an elephant and embarked in his own boat for a journey to Patna wherefrom he hoped to reach Oudh and seek the Nawab-Wazir's aid. Mir Ja'far on the other hand being afraid of the English reaction at his lack of active support to the English at Plassey refused to assume power in the capital.

On his arrival on the 29th Clive rode to the Mansurganj palace and in the presence of the dignitaries and courtiers conducted Mir Ja'far to the *masnad* of Bengal. Clive made a present of a plate of gold *mohars* and congratulated Mir Ja'far as the *subahdar* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

Siraj and his party after three days journey halted near Rajmahal to get some food prepared for his women. He was recognised (though poorly dressed) by Datta Shah, a Muslim *faqir*, who had suffered some wrong at his hand. He handed these fugitives over to the *faujdar* of Rajmahal, who sent them to Mir Ja'far (2 July). Mir Ja'far not knowing what to do handed him over to his reckless son, Miran, who had him murdered through Muhammadi Beg, a man brought up by 'Ali Vardi's widow. His mangled body was paraded in the streets of Murshidabad, carried on an elephant, and given a silent burial near the grave of his grandfather. Lutf-un-nisa was granted a pension of Rs. 100 and sent to live at Dacca. She returned to Murshidabad four years later subsisting on the pension plus Rs. 305 per month granted to her for looking after the graves of the Nawabs at Murshidabad and those of Haji Ahmad and the members of his family at Patna.¹ As long as she lived, she burnt a memorial taper on the grave of her forgotten lord. Miran, for making Mir Ja'far's dynasty secure murdered Murad-ud-Daulah, the posthumous son of Akram-ud-Daulah, and the younger brother

¹ F. N. Nikhilnath Ray, *Murshidabad Kakhani*, p. 247.

of Siraj and had the two daughters of 'Ali Vardi including Ghasiti drowned to death.

The Battle of Plassey is a great land-mark in the history of Bengal. It terminates the period of Muslim rule in Bengal, though Mir Ja'far and the members of his family continued to sit on the *masnad* of Bengal, the real power had passed into the hands of the English. The degenerate Nawabs were mere puppets in their hands.

It is difficult to regard Siraj-ud-Daulah as a national hero in the strict sense of the term. His public and private character lacked those qualities which would have enabled him to face difficulties and danger. He would have made greater appeal to the imagination of the posterity if he had fought heroically and lost his life on the battle-field. Then again he left the capital for Patna when the valiant course would have been to organise the defence of the capital.

According to the terms of the secret treaty entered into between the English and Mir Ja'far, the latter had agreed to allow the French possessions in Bengal pass into the hands of the English. He had also stipulated to pay the English a sum of one crore of rupees in respect of their losses in Calcutta during the capture of the city by Siraj-ud-Daulah and twenty-seven lakhs of rupees to compensate the losses sustained by the residents of Calcutta. Furthermore, all lands south of Calcutta as far as Kalpi were to be handed over to the Company in *zamindari* right. In addition to these specified terms, Mir Ja'far had to arrange privately large gifts for the servants of the Company. According to the Select Committee (1772), it was estimated that the total amount of gifts taken from Mir Ja'far stood at about £ 1,250,000 (nearly Rs. 1,25,00,000) of which Clive alone received £ 234,000. Later on he had to pay £ 400,000 to the English army and navy, £ 50,000 towards the pension fund of the disabled soldiers, £ 150,000 to a Select Committee of six persons and eight to fifty thousand pounds to each of the other members of the council.

Even these did not give the unhappy Mir Ja'far immunity from further demands. He found only 1½ million sterling in Siraj-ud-Daulah's treasury and the British claims amounted to 2¼ million sterling. Mir Ja'far had to sell all the jewellery, gold, goods and furniture and borrow money from the Murshidabad bankers (*seths*) and start his political career under a great handicap. Mir Ja'far conferred upon Clive the rank of a noble (*amir*) and an annual income of £ 30,000 from his *jagir*, which the Company was to have paid to the Nawab in respect of quit rent for lands south of Calcutta. Paradoxically, the Company allowed this arrangement to continue and thus place itself in the position of subordination to one of its servants.

The most urgent need after Plassey was the restoration of orderly administration and Clive cannot be exonerated for his share of the blame for the notorious misgovernment which followed in Bengal. Though Clive was writing to Mr. Pitt (Chatham)¹, the then prime minister of Britain, asking him to assume full responsibility for the Indian administration, he was busy sending substantial cash gifts to his brothers and sisters.² The servants of the Company finding no check or control exercised over them indulged in making money by all means. It was quite natural that the Nawab and his officers should resent this state of affairs.

It was at this juncture that the Shahzadah ('Ali Guhar) invaded Bengal from the north and the Marathas entered from the south. The Nawab, intent on terminating the tutelage of the Company, entered into secret negotiations with the Dutch, the old trade rivals of the English, having factories at Chinsurah on the Ganges. The Dutch had a grievance against the English for subjecting their vessels to search. So when a fleet of seven Dutch vessels from their Far Eastern colonies pushed their way into the Ganges towards Chinsurah,

¹ Malcolm, *Life of Clive*, II, 177.

² Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, III, 353.

Clive captured their entire fleet. Their land forces were defeated by Colonel Forde (November, 1759). The Dutch submitted, paid ten lakhs of rupees as damages and limited themselves to purely commercial pursuits. By this time the Shahzadah made a fresh effort and attacked Patna once again (1760) but he had to retire. The same year Clive departed for Europe and there ensued in Bengal, in the words of Sir Alfred Lyall', a "period of Anglo-Indian history, which throws grave and unpardonable discredit on English name."

On Clive's departure, Vansittart was raised to governorship. The Nawab, being on the verge of bankruptcy, could not pay his troops. On the other hand, the Court of Directors had ceased remitting money to the Company thinking that opulent Bengal would be able to finance Bombay traders also. Under such a situation, the Company's servants scandalously abused their own positions. Finding that there was nobody to control or restrain them, they lost all sense of honour, justice and integrity, and plundered in a more systematic and business-like fashion than the worst of the invaders. The council, instead of interfering, proved to be the worst offenders. Mir Ja'far failing to oblige the English by making more payments, Mir Qasim, his son-in-law, was raised by the English to the *masnad* of Bengal after a bloodless revolution.

Earlier, he had helped Mir Ja'far in the pursuit of Nawab Sirj-ud-Daulah following his defeat at Plassey and was, in consequence, raised to the *faujdari* of Rangpur. In 1759, he figured in the campaign against Shahzadah 'Ali Guhar in Bihar. He rose to prominence by paying a sum of three lacs of rupees to the mutinous troops of Mir Ja'far, who were demanding their arrears of pay, at Murshidabad. Mir Qasim entered into a secret treaty with the Company (Sept. 27, 1760), promising to pay money to finance its Deccan wars. Mir

Ja'far was forced to abdicate when the troops of Company besieged him in his palace. Vansittart, the governor, and Warren Hastings, then a member of the Calcutta council, were the chief supporters of this change, because Mir Ja'far's bankruptcy was dragging the Company to ruin. The English gained from the new Nawab, the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong. The Calcutta council took a sum of £200,000 as gratuity of which Vansittart alone received £ 50,000. Mir Qasim had to pay another £ 50,000 to the Company by assigning the income from the production of chunam at Sylhet. Partly through the seizure of cash belonging to the members of the royal family, including ladies, and partly by taking loans from the *seths* of Murshidabad, he improved the financial situation. Mir Ja'far was given a fixed pension of Rs. 15,000 a month and allowed to live in Calcutta. Following a defeat in Bihar at the hands of Major Carnac, the Shahzadah Shah 'Alam II, a virtual prisoner of the English since February 6, 1761, installed Mir Qasim on the *masnad* of Bengal at a ceremonious function held at Patna. Mir Qasim fixed for the Emperor an allowance of Rs. 24 lakhs per annum. In June, 1761 he left Patna after receiving another *nazr* from Mir Qasim. The Emperor conferred upon Mir Qasim a *mansab* of 7000, and the high sounding title of *Nawab 'Ali-Jah Nazim-ul-Mulk Intizam-ud-Daulah Qasim 'Ali Khan*. Raja Ram Narain, the deputy Nawab at Patna, was suspended from office and imprisoned for his intrigues with the English.

Mir Qasim was different from the indolent, easy-going, irresolute, opium-eating and hemp-drinking Mir Ja'far. He soon freed his province from the turbulence of the *zamindars* and gave them immunity from the invasion of Shuja'-ud-Daulah, the Nawab-Wazir of Oudh. But he had soon to face difficulties. The first was the defiant attitude of Mr. Ellis, the head of Patna factory. The second was the revival of the old

controversy arising out of English claims to duty-free trade. By a *farman* of Emperor Farrukh-Siyar, 1717, the Company had secured the privilege of carrying on export trade in certain commodities¹ on payment of nominal dues at 2½%. 'Ali Vardi Khan had strongly resisted the pretensions of the English merchants when they attempted to apply it to their internal trade and extend it to their *gumashtas* (agents). Mir Ja'far appears to have conceded to the English the right of duty-free trade, provided the ships so engaged flew the Company's flag. It was not necessary for them to carry the *dastak* (customs permit). The indigenous traders had to pay full duty and far from competing with the English were faced with ruin. The seriousness of the situation can be gauged from the representation made by some bold *zamindars* before the Calcutta council. They wrote to say that the Company's *gumashtas* had usurped all trade in every village of Bengal trading in linen, chunam, mustard-seed, tobacco, turmeric, oil, rice, hemp, grams, wheat and all kinds of grain..... " At last, in June 1762, Mir Qasim settled down at Monghyr where he could get a better opportunity of training his army and free himself from abject dependence on the English.

After this even the controversy over private trade claimed by the Company's servants and their Indian agents assumed a critical turn. They resented checking of the customs permit by all the nawab's officers and claimed immunity because of the Company's flag. The nawab complained with justice that " they send other people's goods with their own under protection of the

¹ Cf. Thompson and Garrat, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, p. 101. Warren Hastings's appraisal of the situation runs thus : "Then the trade in such commodities as were bought and sold in the country was entirely confined to the natives; they were either farmed out or circulated through the Province by the poorer sort of people to whom they afforded a subsistence. The privileges therefore claimed by the Company and allowed by the government were originally designed both for goods, brought into the country or purchased in it for exportation; in effect, it was never limited to that; nor can any difference of power convey to us a right which we confessedly wanted before."

dustak." Warren Hastings wrote about the situation in these words. "I have been surprised to meet with several English flags in places where I have passed and on the rivers. I do not believe that I passed a boat without one." The English merchants freely sold their *dastak* in lieu of payment and the holder openly evaded paying the customs dues. The effect on the country was ruinous as can be gathered from Becher's Report, 1769. Becher was an Englishman and the Company's resident at Murshidabad. "I well remember" he wrote, "this country when trade was free and the flourishing state it was then in ; with concern I see the present ruinous condition which I am convinced is greatly owing to the monopoly that has been made of late years in the Company's name of almost all manufactures in the country."¹ The English merchants complained of 'unnecessary' interference from the Nawab's customs officers, and the latter resented the open defiance of the Nawab's authority. While this controversy was poisoning the relations between the Nawab and the Englishmen, Mr. Vansittart, the governor and president of the Calcutta council came on a mission to Monghyr (Nov. 30, 1762). The parties arrived at an agreement to the effect that no *dastak* was necessary for inland trade which was to pay a duty of 9% in case of the English, and 25% in case of indigenous merchants.² There was to be no detention for external trade after *dastak* had been examined, and goods passing without *dastak* were to be seized. The agreement was critically received by the Company's officers and their *gumashtas*. And when the Nawab's Officers tried to enforce it, the Company's servants resisted the demand for payment and even resorted to force and arrested the Nawab's officers. The Calcutta council in spite of the protests of Vansittart and Warren Hastings rejected Qasim-Vansittart

¹ Cf. Thompson and Garratt, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, p. 102.

² N. L. Chatterji, *Mir Qasim*, p. 49. In some commodities such as salt the duty was to be at 40%.

agreement and accused the Nawab of breaking the treaty. Under such circumstances the Nawab ordered the total remission of duties for two years, defying English protest.

Meanwhile, the Calcutta council sent a mission to Monghyr through Amyatt and Hay for the annulment of the agreement and claiming compensation for the losses suffered by the English before and after the agreement and punishment of the Nawab's officers guilty of harassment. The Nawab refused to yield. During the stay of this mission took place the unfortunate Ellis incident. The Nawab's customs post at Patna seized a boat loaded with muskets. Suspecting that these were intended for the use of the Company's troops at the Patna factory, the Nawab demanded Ellis's recall from Patna. After a month's stay, Amyatt decided to return (June 24, 1763) and Hay stayed on at Monghyr. The next morning Ellis launched an attack upon Patna town and seized it. Amyatt and his party were killed in their boats when an exchange of fire took place between the Nawab's forces led by Muhammad Taqi Khan and the Englishmen (July 24, 1763).

Now all avenues of reconciliation between the Nawab and the English were closed and war seemed inevitable. After settling at Monghyr the Nawab had been reorganizing his troops and collecting materials of war. He had sent an envoy to the Nawab-Wazir of Oudh and the Emperor of Delhi soliciting their aid. Though not a warrior himself, he zealously put himself to the task of recruiting a modern army. He trained his troops in western methods of warfare, the trainers being a host of American and European adventures like Gurgin Khan,¹ the commander-in-chief, Marlat, Aratoon, Somru,² Gentil and others. Attractive emoluments and regular pay drew many adventures and even English

¹ Khwajah Gregory, an American born in Isfahan.

² Walter Leinhardt, a Lorrainer.

deserters. The army consisted of Persians, Tartars, Afghans and Indians. Muhammad Taqi Khan, a Persian, was the head of a band of musketeers. A big cannon foundry was opened at Monghyr. It was indeed remarkable that the arms manufactured at Monghyr were not inferior to those imported from Europe.¹ The flints of the muskets were made of Rajmahal agates and the material of their barrels was better than of the English muskets. The guns cast at Monghyr were chiefly made of brass and gun carriages made locally were as good as the English models. Gunpowder prepared locally was equally excellent.

Mir Qasim precipitated a breach rather prematurely. The time at his disposal was not sufficient for the formation of an efficient army. The Nawab's troops were defeated by the English at Katwa near Burdwan, then at Giria,² 15 *kos* from Murshidabad and finally at Udhwanala, at which last place Asad-ullah Khan had stopped the English advance for sometime. After the last defeat, the Nawab quitted Monghyr for Patna, where he murdered the English prisoners including Ellis. Mir Ja'far was placed a second time on the *masnad* of Bengal at Murshidabad (July, 1763). Mir Qasim fled to Oudh intent on invading Bengal with Shuja'-ud-Daulah's help. Mir Qasim owed his defeat partly to his lack of soldierly talents, partly to his employment of mercenary soldiers who could not be actuated by any partriotic motives. His commander-in-chief (Gurgin Khan) was in secret intrigue with the English. Though his troops were numerically superior to the English, they were no match against the English disciplined troops. Among his generals none except Muhammad Taqi Khan, Asad-ullah Khan and Najaf Khan were of any value to him.

Mir Qasim was, as even his worst detractors would

¹ N. L. Chatterji, *Mir Qasim*, p. 271.

² Described by Mr. Beveridge, (*Calcutta Review*, April 1893) as the Panipat of Bengal.

admit, an able, vigilant, and strict administrator. He was undoubtedly a genuine patriot.¹ He has been highly spoken of for his business talents and remarkable application by Ghulam Husain and Vansittart. Apart from his genius in matters of administration, he was an expert in problems of finance and revenue. The creation of a new army on western lines, the repression of anarchic tendencies and the general reconstruction of the *nizamat* in such a short period of rule were no mean achievement. Mir Qasim was a zealous and efficient worker, a strict disciplinarian and an enemy of fraud and corruption. He possessed scholarly tastes and was proficient in Mathematics and Astronomy. According to Vansittart, he discharged the Company's debts and heavy arrears of his army. "I was convinced" he writes, "that while we did not encroach upon the Nawab's right or disturb his government, he would never wish to quarrel with us..... and no one instance can be produced of his molesting us in a single article of commerce, till the contention, he was drawn into by the usurpation of our *gumashtas*." Henceforth the English were drawn according to Sir Alfred Lyall² into connexions with upper India upon a scene of fresh operations that grew rapidly wider. Mir Qasim occupies in the struggle of freedom, a pre-eminent place.

On being placed over the Bengal *masnad* a second time, Mir Ja'far undertook in a new treaty, signed on July 10, 1763, to keep a permanent English resident at his court to compensate the English for losses suffered at the hands of Mir Qasim and not to levy a duty of more than 2½% on English salt trade.³ The Emperor

¹ Cf. Thompson and Garratt, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* p. 100.

² *Growth and Expansion of British Rule in India*, p. 148.

³ This time also, Mir Jaffar had to pay £300,050 to the Company £530,000 to the gentlemen of the council and £250,000 to the army and the navy. Cf. Thompson and Garratt, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, p. 104.

and the Nawab-Wazir of Oudh who had invaded Bengal in the company of Mir Qasim were completely defeated by Major Hector Munro at a very contested battle at Buxar, 1764, in which the English lost 847 killed against 2000 of the confederates. "Never did the Indian army fight so well" was the comment of Clive. It was the most significant battle fought in east India since that of Plassey. It was not merely the Nawab of Bengal who was defeated and humbled but also the Emperor, the *de jure* suzerain of India and his *wazir*, the latter submitted when the English forces marched on Lucknow. The significance of the Battle of Buxar is heightened by the fact that the Marathas who had overrun the whole of northern India, had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Ahmad Shah Abdali in the Third Battle of Panipat (1761), leaving the English as the strongest power in northern India.

Meanwhile, in February 1765 the old Mir Ja'far died and was succeeded by his minor son Najm-ud-Daulah. This brought to an end the system of puppet Nawabs, for in the same year Clive secured for the Company the *diwani*. Meanwhile the orders of the Court of Directors against private trade and taking of presents became dead letters. The new Nawab was made to pay £139,357 and concede the disputed trade rights of the Company's servants. Corruption had never been so widely prevalent. According to Verelst, there was 'a general contempt of superiors and a total contempt of public order.' Even Clive admitted the seriousness of the situation when he wrote to say, "I shall only say such a sense of anarchy and confusion, bribery, corruption and extortion was never seen or heard in any country but Bengal, and so many fortunes acquired in so unjust and rapacious a manner." While dilating upon the corruption of the merchants he said that they "have committed actions which made the name of

the Company's stink in the nostrils of the Hindu or Mussalman, and the Company's servants themselves have interfered in the revenues of the Nawab and turned out and put in the officers of the government at leisure and made every body pay for their preferments." Clive's fortunes revived when the news of this deplorable state of affairs became known in England. Already made an Irish peer, he was selected as the governor of Bengal and made commander-in-chief of the army at the same time by the Court of Proprietors and was allowed further the income of his *jagir* (which had previously been stopped), for the next ten years or until his death, if it came earlier. He was given almost uncontrolled authority by being empowered to form a select committee nominated and presided over by him.

On arrival in Bengal in May, 1765, he found the external situation improved in the Company's favour. The Emperor was virtually the Company's prisoner after the Battle of Buxar and the Nawab-Wazir on the verge of abject submission. Clive's work during the second term of his office consisted of (i) reforms in the Company's civil and military establishments, (ii) acquisition of the *diwani* and regulation of external affairs. He forced the Company's servants to conform to regulations of the Court of Directors regarding the acceptance of presents. The Court of Directors instead of assenting to his proposal of allocating the revenues of salt monopoly to the Company's superior servants, agreed to give Clive an extra allowance of £ 18,000 per annum from the revenues of Bengal and to add his fixed pay of £ 4,000 a year. He abolished the double *bhatta* or the field allowance usually paid by indigenous rulers employing troops of foreign nationalities. This allowance being paid by Mir Ja'far became a charge upon the Company as well. Clive ordered that officers in Patna and Monghyr cantonments were to draw half *bhatta* and were to be entitled to the full *bhatta* when they took the field in Bengal and

Bihar and while outside Bengal (or in Oudh), they would draw double *bhatta*. These innovations caused a mutiny of his officers who were dealt with by him firmly and drastically. But Clive did nothing to remove the abuses in inland trade.

By this time the Mughul Empire was fast disintegrating. All ambitious officers were defying the authority of their suzerain and cutting slice after slice off his territories. In addition to the Deccan, Oudh, Rohilkhand, Bharatpur had slipped from the Imperial control, the Marathas were creating the wildest confusion by ravaging north India with impunity. The Panjab had become a scene of contest between the Marathas and the Afghans led by Ahmad Shah Abdali. Even Delhi and Agra were occupied by ambitious chiefs. Any body could buy from the Emperor a *jagir* or collectorship of revenues of territories which were no longer in the imperial control. It was during this confusion that Clive secured for the Company the rights of the *diwani* or collectorship of the revenues of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa on an annual payment of a sum of twenty six lacs of rupees. It also signified the assumption by the Company of the civil government of the province. Clive was not daring enough to assume direct responsibilities for fear of rousing the hostility of the Muslims, the Marathas and the European powers, he, therefore, assigned the task of the collection of revenues to Muhammad Riza Khan (already the *naib-nazim* since 1763) as *diwan* of Bengal and to Raja Shitab Rai in Bihar. He left the *nizamat* which implied control of the police and the army in the hands of the Nawab. But the Company was in control of the army which propped up the Nawab. The collection of revenue was left in the hands of native officers who were powerless to check the misconduct of the Company's officers. This was the famous "Double Government of Clive" which, instead of improving conditions made 'confusion more confounded and corruption more corrupt.' The revenue supervisors

of the Company who were Englishmen, were empowered to carry on their private trade and in their eagerness to enrich themselves brought the Company on the verge of bankruptcy. The latter had to ask the Home Government for a loan of £ 400,000. At the same time it made an increased demand on the *zamindars* so that the burden of tax fell heavily on the cultivators and their miseries knew no bounds. Before his departure from Bengal in 1767, shattered in health, Clive stabilised the Company's relations by giving back to Shuja'-ud-Daulah his territories (on payment of an indemnity of fifty lacs of rupees) except Kara and Allahabad which were given to Emperor Shah 'Alam. In May 1773 the British parliament, on the basis of the Select Committee report, criticized Clive's exactions of £ 234,000 on various counts and occasions. This amounted to a stricture on his conduct, and after a whole night's debate, it passed a qualifying resolution, saying that "at the same time, he had done great service to his country." This being in fact a censure on his reputation, Clive, already his mind unhinged, committed suicide on November 2, 1774, in the fifty-eighth year of his life.

From the time of Clive's departure from Bengal and Warren Hasting's appointment, Verelst (1767-69) and Cartier (1769-70) both being civil servants of average ability carried on the Company's administration in Bengal. The evils of Clive's 'Double Government' became even more manifest, and the Nawab and his officers failed to check private trade and corruption. The province was drained of wealth and native traders were ruined, and the people were reduced to the direst straits; a severe famine resulted in 1769-70. "The scene of misery that intervened," wrote Hunter in his *Annals of Rural Bengal*, "and still continues shock humanity..... Certain it is that in many parts the living had fed on the dead. According to Warren Hasting's estimate a third of the population of Bengal perished. Many of the

Company's servants were rightly accused of trading in human miseries. "The revenues" says Hunter, "were collected with cruel severity: little less than 5% of the revenue were remitted at the peak time of its prevalence and 10% were added..... This terrible calamity, whose ravages two generations failed to repair had far-reaching social and economic effects and many old and aristocratic families were ruined."

In the miserable condition of the people there was a persistent revival of the worship of Kali among the Hindus. Ram Prasad, a contemporary of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah (d. 1775) and poet in the court of Krishnagor *zamindars*, and an ardent worshipper of Kali, complains that to some the goddess had bestowed wealth, horses, and elephant chariots, to other miseries and toils of labour. "Some live in palaces," he says, "as I would myself like to do. O! Mother, are these fortunate folks (*i. e.* Englishmen) your grandfathers, and I no relation at all?..... Some ride in Palkis, while, I have the privilege of carrying the shoulder pole."¹

The paradox of the whole situation was that though the Company's officers were enriching themselves, the Company was facing bankruptcy. It was under such circumstances that Warren Hastings who had already been for 22 years in India, was made governor of Bengal by the Home authorities. To effect economy in expenditure, he dismissed the *naib diwans* of Bengal and Bihar and had them charged for embezzlement. Raja Nand-Kumar acted in these affairs as the Company's informant. Both of them were honourably acquitted. He established a Board of Revenue at Calcutta and had the treasury removed from Murshidabad to Calcutta. The Nawab's allowance was cut down from 32 to 16 lacs of rupees on the ground of his seeking the protection of the Marathas, 'the only enemies of the British in India,'²

¹ *Bengali Religious Lyrics*, quoted by Thompson and Spencer, O. U. P.

² In 1765, 53 lacs, 1766, 41 lacs, 1769, 32 lacs. He also appointed Munni Begum widow of Mir Ja'far, formerly a dancer, as the guardian of the Nawab in preference to his own mother and Raja Gurdas, son of Raja Nand Kumar as the steward of the Nawab's household.

and restored Kara and Allahabad to the Nawab-Wazir of Oudh in lieu of 50 lacs of rupees. He also abolished the pensions of hundreds of noble families, payable under the Nawab, families which could not get jobs under the Company, causing them untold distress. He managed to secure money under every conceivable pretext to defray the expenses of the government and of his wars. In the process he is accused of having enriched himself. By enforcing economy, he reduced the government expenditure from 29 lacs to a little over 13 lacs. He succeeded in eradicating some of the evils of private trade by enforcing new trade regulations involving abolition of duty on all merchants, native or foreign. By the above methods Warren Hastings stabilized the position of the Company in Bengal. Meanwhile in pursuance of the publication of the Select Committee Report, on the condition of the Company's administration in India, the Parliament passed two Acts, one granting loans to the Company, limiting their dividends and obliging them to submit their account to the treasury; the second, the Regulating Act, giving to the Company a new constitution. The tenure of the office of the directors was limited to four years, one-fourth retiring each year. There was to be a governor-general of Bengal assisted by four councillors who were to take decision by majority, the governor-general having a casting vote in case of a tie. The governor-general and council were empowered to check and superintend the subordinate presidencies, in their relations with the Indian states. The Directors were to lay before the treasury all correspondence from India regarding revenues and civil and military affairs before the secretary of state. Warren Hastings was mentioned in the Act as governor-general and the councillors were to hold office for 5 years. The Act established a supreme court of judicature in Calcutta with Sir Elijah Impey as the chief judge.¹

¹ The salaries according to the Act were £25,000 per annum for governor-general; £10,000 for a councillor; £8,000 for chief justice.

The Act soon proved to be a half measure. Firstly the administration of the Nawab was allowed to continue only, the sovereignty of the crown was asserted. A deadlock resulted soon in the council, the majority being opposed to Warren Hastings. Thirdly, the subordinate presidencies continued to act independently of the Act taking advantage of the provision regarding them to act independently in cases of emergencies. The law that the supreme court was to administer and its relationship with the council were not mentioned. In 1770 started a strange tussle between the governor-general and his council on one hand and the supreme court on the other over jurisdiction. The court claimed it over the whole province, the council allowed it over British subjects only. The quarrel reached its height over two cases, when the council rejected the jurisdiction of the supreme court and the latter declared the governor-general and his council guilty of contempt of court. Matters, however, were straightened out when Hastings conferred upon Impey, the chief justiceship of the *Sadr Diwani Adalat*, which carried an annual emolument of £6,500 in addition to his £8,000 as the chief justice of the supreme court. Sir Elijah Impey who was a school fellow of Warren Hastings in England was a man of little integrity. According to *Hickey's Gazette*, a Calcutta journal, Impey (nicknamed *Poolbund*, bridge builder) divided with Mrs. Hastings the patronage in the hands of the governor. Macaulay called him as the most infamous judge in the list of British judges. Nor was Warren Hastings less greedy. He accumulated money from illegal exactions and gratifications through his Indian agents. These were substantial amounts and even women were not spared. He took 3½ lacs of rupees from Munni Begum, widowed wife of Mir Jafar. According to Sir John Malcolm even his most strenuous

120 The Patna Case, and the Kasijure Case.
2 Mrs. Imhoff (Marion Hastings) was a German lady whose divorce was procured from her husband by heavy payment in 1777.

advocates are forced to admit that the whole system of administration over which he ruled was corrupt and full of abuses. If he had purified the administration as is asserted on his behalf, the reforms of Lord Cornwallis would not have been necessary. He farmed revenues through agents, and entered into contracts of questionable nature involving huge amounts.

Meanwhile discussion in the British Parliament about Indian affairs led to the passing of the Pitt's India Act, 1784, a measure which followed closely upon Fox's India Bill, rejected by the House of Lords. Hastings expressed his resentment by saying " Fifty Burkes, Foxes, and Francises could not have planned a worse measure." By the Pitt's India Act, the political and commercial interests in India were left in the hands of the Company but it subjected the Directors to a close supervision by a Board of Control whose president was given a special salary in 1793. The main features of the Act remained the basis of Anglo-Indian administration till 1857. The Act made the minor presidencies subordinate to the governor-general. The Bill initiated by Mr. Pitt (the younger), was a compromise measure in relation to the Fox's India Bill which failed partly because of the King's opposition and partly owing to the Tory fear of transferring patronage into the hands of the Whig ministry.

On his return to England, Warren Hastings was impeached by the House of Commons on twenty charges including oppression of the Begums of Oudh, arbitrary settlement of land revenue, fraudulent dealings in contracts, and acceptance of presents and bribes and ultimately acquitted in 1795 in view of the long and agonizing trial lasting for seven years. The trial by itself focussed the attention of the British people on the affairs of India. Irrespective of what he was, and what irregularities he committed Warren Hastings had taken some interest in the promotion of education in Bengal. He granted

subsistence allowances to the Hindu pundits who were assembled in Calcutta and employed in the compilation of the Hindu Code. He fixed emoluments for the Persian and Arabic scholars, and took the initiative in getting the *Hidayah* translated. He founded an Academy for the study of the different branches of Muslim learning at the expense of the Company.

From the British point of view, Hastings laid firmly the foundation of British rule in India by steering the affairs of the Company in critical times.

Warren Hastings was succeeded by Mr. Macpherson, a civil servant, who held office for a year and a half. During his time corruption and jobbery increased. The choice necessarily fell on one who was not a servant of the Company, and not brought up in the corrupt atmosphere of the Company's rule. A bill was passed by the Parliament, making Lord Cornwallis governor-general and commander-in-chief at the same time and empowering him to override his council in emergencies. He justified his choice by doing useful work in the sphere of internal administration.

During the decline of the Mughul rule, some of the collectors of land revenue, who were mere officers of the state, had become hereditary. Besides this in many areas there were *zamindars*, the descendants of ancient chiefs. They paid the land revenues raised by them, keeping about a tenth of the amount raised. The *zamindar* held his estate in hereditary, subject to the payment to the state a succession fee. He was charged with keeping the peace under his jurisdiction. Since the Company's assumption of the *diwani*, the actual land revenue collection was made through the agency of these *zamindars* and in 1767, English supervisors were appointed to control them. In 1772 Warren Hastings shifted the revenue headquarters to Calcutta, abolished the *naib-diwani* and leased the right of collecting revenue to the highest bidder for 5 years. This expedient

failed on account of the incursion of speculators into the business, who gave very high bids and squeezed the peasants. Such people could have no interest in improving their estates. On his arrival Cornwallis found both the *zamindars* and the cultivators rapidly languishing. Following instructions from the British Parliament, he first effected in 1789 a decennial system which he converted into a permanent one in 1793.

The measure created indefeasible rights of the *zamindars*, encouraged cultivation and contributed to general prosperity. The *zamindars* were better off, they had not to pay a succession tax, nor required any permission to sell their estates. On the other hand, the tenants derived no benefits. In the beginning the settlement was harsh. Many found it impossible to pay the stipulated amount and had to forfeit their old *zamindaris* in favour of new lessees. Those lessees who could stand the ordeal were enriched in course of time when the rising prices made the cash settlement lighter for them. The state, however, lost considerable revenue. Many old *zamindar* families, such as those of Dinajpur, Rajshahi and Vishnupur were ruined for good since they could not pay the revenue. Their estates were sold to new men. Those who survived degenerated into parasites, dissipating their earnings in riotous living. It inflicted, according to Hunter, a permanent injury upon the Muslim aristocracy. "We usurped the function," he adds, "of the higher Mussalman officers who had formerly subsisted between the actual collector and the government, whose dragoons were the recognized machinery for enforcing the land tax. On their replacement by English collectors, the Muhammadan nobility either lost their former connection with the land tax or became mere land holders with an elastic title to a part of soil."² Secondly the tendency of the settlement was "to acknowledge as landholders the subordinate Hindu officers who dealt

¹ *Indian Muslims*, p. 162.

² *Ibid.*, p. 163.

directly with the husbandmen. The net result was that it elevated the Hindu collectors who up to that time had held unimportant posts to the position of landlords, gave them proprietary rights in the soil and allowed them to accumulate wealth, which would have gone to the Mussalmans under their own rule."

Cornwallis's judicial reforms, which claimed to be an improvement upon Hasting's work, established a net work of courts both in the districts and the provinces, leaving only small causes to courts presided over by Indians having the status of *sadr amins*. The district courts were freed from revenue work. There were to be four provincial courts each under European judges. He instituted a court of appeal known as *Sadr Diwani Adalat* at Calcutta and a supreme criminal court of appeal, known as *Sadr Nizamat Adalat*. The criminal jurisdiction of the deputy Nawab was done away with. What was more harmful from the Muslim point of view was the substitution of English in place of the Muslim Law. The upper class Hindus learnt the new system which became to them a magic of immense potency. Under Hastings and Macpherson, the Muslim officers had administered the Muslim Law and Persian was the court language. The old courts were swept away and in their place courts of circuit, each under two judges of the covenanted civil service were appointed. This caused considerable delay in dispensing justice and there ensued huge accumulations of cases. In 1793, he issued a new set of regulations re-enacting all the criminal reforms of 1790 and entirely altering the system of civil jurisprudence. He appointed 23 judges in the district and strengthened the power of the courts of circuits. At the same time he attempted to codify the existing laws and procedures in the form of regulations. Though attempts were made to ascertain the Indian legal system through the services of orientalist, the effect of these legal reforms was to deprive the

Indians of offices of trust and responsibility. As such it was the first attempt at the Europeanisation of the judiciary and the civil service. Civil servants were given enlarged salaries to relieve them of temptation. The higher posts were denied to Indians relegating them to a servile position in society. The Europeans, with their Indian concubines and an army of olive coloured children, enjoyed life, drove carriages pulled by ' natives ' to whom no payment was made or rode horses lent to them by ' baboos ' for keeping the *sahibs* in good humour.

During the tenure of Lord Wellesley (1798-1805), Sir George Barlow (1805-06) and Lord Minto (1806-13) nothing worth mentioning happened in Bengal. During the rule of Marquis of Hastings (Lord Moira, 1813-23) legal reforms involving shortening of procedure in certain civil cases was effected. The separation of the judiciary from the executive so much emphasised in Cornwallis Code was done away with. Measures were undertaken to protect the rights of the ' rayats ' against eviction permissible under the permanent settlement. They were given certain prescriptive rights of occupancy as long as they paid their customary rents.

A humble beginning was made under Lord Minto and Lord Hastings at the establishment of the vernacular press with the assistance of Serampore¹ missionaries. The pioneer of the movement was William Carey, a British cobbler by birth and a Baptist by faith, who had to move from Calcutta to the more tolerant atmosphere of the Danish settlement. With the assistance of his colleagues Carey introduced printing which resulted in the publication of the first newspaper in Bengali, the first vernacular newspaper in the whole of Hind-Pakistan². The translation into Bengali of the treatises of the pundits gave an impetus to the growth of Bengali prose literature, giving it eventually a lead over many other

¹ A Danish Settlement on the bank of the Ganges, north of Calcutta.

² The *Samachar-Darpan*, i.e. The Mirror of News.

vernacular literatures of Hind-Pakistan so that it is not too much to say that 'even today, the largest half of the current literature in such languages as Gujrati, is a translation from Bengali.'¹

¹ Thompson and Garrat, pp. 308-309.

CHAPTER XII

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

In the seventeenth century the English East India Company opened trading centres on the mainland of India. In the eighteenth century it acquired territorial power. The process was long, remarkable and interesting.

The Company was founded on the last day of the year 1600. Its aim was trade and trade alone. Europe was in need of eastern spices which it had been importing from the East for a long time. In Medieval Ages this trade passed through the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the neighbouring lands of the Middle East. European countries, however, looked around for alternative routes. One was found by the Portugese, after sustained and consistent efforts in 1498, and throughout the sixteenth century the Portuguese enjoyed the monopoly of trade with the East and supremacy in eastern waters. They guarded it jealously and maintained it by force.

In the seventeenth century Portuguese power declined and the Portuguese and Spanish political relations with their neighbours made it possible for other European countries to enter the field of eastern commerce and adventure. The Dutch were the first to arrive and since their object was the procurement of eastern spices they concentrated their activities in the East Indian Archipelago which were rich in that commodity. In course of time the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish oppositions in the eastern waters, established themselves securely in the East Indian Islands and, under the guidance of their able governor, Coen, they developed a

policy of seizure and occupation of the lands that produced the commodities they wanted.

The English arrived next on the eastern scene. They were also interested in the spice trade, and therefore, their objective was also to set up factories in the East Indian Islands. The Dutch who were already established there were not willing to permit any European rival to encroach upon the trade which they had built up as a result of military and naval actions against the Portuguese and Spanish flotillas on the one hand and the native powers on the other at a heavy cost in men and money. They were unwilling to share the fruits of their victory with other European powers; no amount of pressure from their home authorities could persuade their representatives on the spot to let the English trade in their chosen strongholds of political power and commerce.

International relations in Europe brought England and Holland closer together but this accord could not be translated into action on the scene of eastern commerce and enterprise. One sustained and serious attempt at co-operation ultimately led to the event that came to be known by the English as the Massacre of Amboyna. The English were expelled from Larvor and Pulo Run in 1621-22 by force. The Dutch governor of Amboyna seized Towerson, the English agent, eighteen other Englishmen and several Japanese soldiers in their pay on a trumped up charge of conspiring to seize the Dutch fort, put them to torture and then hanged Towerson with nine other Englishmen and nine Japanese in 1623. The Dutch continued throughout the seventeenth century to thwart successfully English efforts to establish themselves with any security in the spice producing islands.

The English having failed to open up large scale trade relations with the Spice Islands, now under the domination of the Dutch, seriously turned their attention towards the mainland of India. It was not design but force of circumstances which induced the English

to concentrate their attention upon commerce with the Indo-Pakistan sub continent. Having been defeated in their original purpose they fell back upon a less attractive alternative that of starting trade settlements on the mainland. This is an important land-mark in the history of the East India Company in the seventeenth century.

They made a virtue of necessity. The Company had already obtained permission to set up a factory at Surat after Captain Best had defeated a Portuguese fleet off Swally in 1613. In 1622 they captured Ormuz in the Persian Gulf from the Portuguese. They also set up a factory at Masulipatam. In 1633 factories were set up at Balasore and Hariharpur. Francis Day bought the site of Fort St. George at Madras from the *naik* of Chandragiri in 1640. In 1661 the Company obtained the island of Bomaby from Charles II at a nominal quit rent of £ 10 a year. After several vicissitudes of fortune in Bengal, Job Charnock was able to establish a factory at Calcutta. In 1696 Fort William was built there. The *zamindari* of the three neighbouring villages of Sutanuti, Kalighat and Govindpur was obtained through the *faujdar* of Hugli. By the beginning of the eighteenth century the Company had completed a network of factories on the mainland of India with their chief settlements at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, and a number of smaller and ancillary stations spread out on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, as also in the interior of the continent at the courts of the Mughul Emperor and other Hindu and Muslim potentates of India.

Trade flourished and the Company grew in prosperity. The years 1660 to 1680 are regarded as the golden age of the Company. Its stock in 1683 stood at 360, its dividends between the years 1659 and 1691 averaged 25 per cent. per annum. The British evolved a lucrative cycle of trade. They exported bullion from England and manufactured luxury articles. These were mostly sold to the Indian princes and their nobles. From India they bought

opium, calicoes and cotton cloth. These they exported to the China coast where they had a ready market. From China they bought silks. These silks and some Indian opium and cloth they sold in those ports of the Eastern Archipelago where the Dutch either had no interest or allowed the British to enter. From these islands they took spices, mainly to England, but also some to the mainland of India as well.

Surat remained their chief settlement in India until 1687, when this position was taken by Bombay. In the mideighteenth century this position was ultimately occupied by Calcutta ; but Calcutta, Madras and Bombay remained the seats of three independent establishments until 1773. During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries we find European settlements on the coasts of the Indian Peninsula in general, and the English settlements in particular undergoing a phenomenal increase in size, population and prosperity. Calcutta, Madras and Bombay starting from their humble origins turned rapidly into large cities, teeming in population and humming with activity. There were special reasons for this.

In an age of anarchy in this sub continent the English settlements offered the prospect of peace to the inhabitants. The Deccan during the life of Emperor 'Alamgir and the whole of this continent after his death were extremely disturbed politically. Internecine warfare was general, marches and counter marches of troops under princes and nobles and rebels were common, revolution was the order of the day. The Marathas were spreading their depredations far and wide. They ravaged the Carnatic in 1740 under their leaders Fath Singh and Raghuji Bhonsle. Foreign invaders appeared on the scene. Nadir Shah invaded northern India in 1739 and sacked Delhi. This was followed by a regular succession of incursions from the north-west, first under Ahmad Shah and then under Zaman Shah. English

settlements, in comparison, offered a haven of peace. People from the disturbed areas, especially families who had something to lose, began to migrate into the English settlements. They grew into great emporia of overseas and inland trade. Bankers, merchants and manufacturers flourished in them.

During the first century and a half of its existence, the Company had to face several vicissitudes of fortune both at home and abroad. But it emerged from these difficulties a wealthy, influential and a powerful but a commercial concern. There were, however, indications of change. Even in the seventeenth century the comparatively more far-sighted Directors had set for themselves the policy of choosing their servants carefully and with special regard to their administrative capacities. After the charter granted by King James II, the Directors even chose to think of the Company in "the condition of a sovereign state in India." One of their despatches dating back to 1687 contained the famous and oft-quoted order to their president and council in India to "establish such a Politie of civil and military power and create and secure such a large Revenue....as may be the foundation of a large, well grounded, sure English Domination in India for all time to come." This would show that the English had set for themselves the aim of building up a territorial power in this sub-continent. However the adventure of a "war" against Alamgir which resulted in total defeat and humiliation cured the Company for some time of their political ambitions. They were absorbed in their trade, doing all they could to avoid embroiling themselves in Indian politics and zealously minding their own proper commercial business. During the War of Spanish Succession their representatives in the east came to such terms with their neighbouring French settlements as would enable both to remain at peace with each other while their parent nations were fighting elsewhere and thus to carry on their normal commercial activities.

In 1757 the Company emerges definitely as a political and territorial power. The years between 1742 and 1757 were the period of this transition. The change was again brought about against their will, the French were the first to enter Indian politics. French ambition in India and the consequent Anglo-French wars forced the East India Company to take up arms in order to protect its commercial interests.

The French were late in arriving upon the scene of Indian trade. The French nation was engrossed in continental politics. The French commercial class compared to its counterparts in England and Holland was poorer, smaller and less influential. It was under the auspices of the French government that their Company of the Indies was founded. It set up trade settlements in the East; and under the patronage of French monarchs and ministers the Company became firmly established. In India they built their factories on the coast, on navigable rivers and in the interior. Their chief settlements were at Chandarnagar in the delta of the Ganges and at Pondicherry on the Coromandel coast. At both places they had the English as their not too distant neighbours.

From 1720 to 1740 the French shared with their other European neighbours a phenomenal and unprecedented prosperity. One of the chief architects of their prosperity was Dupleix. He was the governor of Chandarnagar from 1731 to 1741 and the governor-general of Pondicherry from 1741 to 1754. The seventeenth century despatches of the directorate of the English East India Company may have contained references to political power in India which were in the nature of expressions of vague hopes and aspirations and their significance, in the light of later events, may be considered to be prophetic; but it was Dupleix who gradually but specifically and deliberately set for himself the aim of

building up a French dominion in India.

It was fear of French success that forced the English into action. They must save their trade. It could not be saved, they saw, if the French were successful ; and therefore in self-defence, they began to oppose Dupleix's plans. The result was that open fighting against the French began during the War of Austrian Succession and the Seven Years War. The fight continued, although it was concealed under the technical veneer of the rivalries of native princes from 1748 to 1756, when England and France were not at war in Europe. Dupleix was recalled in 1754 and the English emerged successful from the Anglo-French duel in India.

The causes of the English success are not far to seek. Firstly there were certain grave defects inherent in the character and work of Dupleix himself. While planning glorious schemes of conquest and dominion, he underestimated the difficulties in his way. He was much too sanguine and over-optimistic in temperament. He was surprised at the English opposition and continued to consider it trivial. He was little interested in trade. Once he had launched upon his political and military programme, French shipping fell and trade languished.

The English, on the other hand, continued showing profits for their trading activities even in this period of war. Dupleix aimed at financing the French Company from Indian revenues. It was like putting the cart before the horse. The expected revenues never arrived. Dupleix again failed to keep the home authorities informed of the true state of affairs in India. He represented to them that the English opposition was meagre and that the English would ultimately accept French political supremacy in India. Paris authorities learnt the news of the defeat of Jacques Law and the fall of Trichinopoly for the first time from London and attributed it to the proverbial boasting of the English sailors. They were, however, soon disillusioned. They decided to recall

Dupleix on the representations of the British ambassador.

Count de Lally, upon whom fell the burden of fighting the English during the Seven Years War, was none too well-equipped for the emergency. It is no doubt true that he was brave, conscientious, incorruptible and a better soldier than Dupleix. But de Lally was hot headed and hasty, inconsiderate and violent. He was intolerant of advice, even from those, who knew local conditions better than he did. Therefore he did not get the whole-hearted co-operation of his subordinates. He had no head for details. The Paris authorities made it worse for him by ordering him to reform the system of administration in the French settlements in India as well. Lally was too conscientious to postpone this odious duty until the termination of the war. Lally's choice as the French governor-general may be considered as the second important cause of the French failure.

Thirdly the English were much better served in these critical times. Clive was a genius. He was a good diplomat, a grand soldier and a great leader of men. His attack and capture of Arcot was a master stroke of military strategy, his holding it for three months against odds established his skill in leadership. His military conduct at Trichinopoly and again at Calcutta and Plassey show his quality. Lawrence and Coote were other soldiers of distinction in the East India Company's service. Saunders, posted at Madras, was competent and a man of sound common sense ; and Orme, was in addition, gifted with a fair share of foresight.

The fourth important reason for the French failure was Bussy's assignment to the Deccan. Dupleix had to keep first Muzaffar Jang and then Salabat Jang on the throne of Deccan. They could not be maintained there without a strong French force. He therefore sent Bussy off to Hyderabad with a considerable contingent of troops. Thus the best French general was sent away

from the theatre of action. The French force was divided, and the task of fighting the English devolved upon second rate officers. Bussy had his hands full. While Clive in Bengal continued to help the English war effort in the Carnatic with men and money, Bussy in the Deccan was in no position to do so.

The foremost cause of the English success was their supremacy at sea. Except for a short spell when Bourdonnais was able to wrest naval supremacy from Peyton and consequently was able to attack and take Madras, the supremacy in the Indian Ocean remained in the hands of the English. This enabled them to maintain their communications with home and between their several stations and to hinder those of the French. Thus they were kept better supplied with men, arms and equipment. Their mastery at sea enabled them to transport their troops freely, to cover the operations of forces on land and to deprive the French of their necessary supplies. The site of French naval base in the Islands of Bourbon and Mauritius in the Indian Ocean was defective, it was too far away from the mainland to serve as effectively as Madras and Bombay were doing for the English.

Thus we see that, d'Ache's refusal to co-operate with de Lally from the sea postponed the latter's projected attack upon Madras ; and the former's defeat at the hands of Pocock in the naval engagement off Karikal obliged Lally to raise his siege of Tanjore. The French naval commander sailed for Mauritius and in the absence of support from the sea, Lally's siege of Madras failed miserably, for the sea board was free to the English and at a critical time they received reinforcements from that quarter. D'Ache was defeated again in a third naval engagement against the English and was driven off the coast with the result, that de Lally was defeated at Wandiwash in 1760 and Pondicherry was compelled to surrender in 1761 after a close investment by land and sea. Supremacy at sea, in fact, was the necessary

prerequisite of the success of a European power in India and the English possessed that necessity in the mid-eighteenth century.

Finally, the East India Company was sustained by the nature of its organization at home. It was a mercantile concern that owed its existence and continuation to vigorous private enterprise. The French Company in comparison suffered from the essential lethargy of control by a government that had its hands full and was embroiled in three major wars in quick succession between 1742 and 1773.

By 1763 the East India Company was firmly established as a political and territorial power in Bengal and the Carnatic. During the early phases of the Anglo-French struggle the military weakness of the native states had come to light. Both the French and the English had to deal with Indian weapons of war and military technique which were far inferior to those of the Europeans.

The first occasion, when the superiority of the European military machine over a native army was demonstrated on a field of battle in India, was during the War of Austrian Succession.

The French had occupied Madras. Nawab Anwar-ud-din of Arcot who felt that his peace was disturbed and had to be restored, at the request of the English, chose to send them succour at Madras. The help could not reach there in time. Dupleix refused to hand over Madras either to the English or to the Nawab. The Nawab's troops proceeded to lay siege to Madras and hoped to starve them out. When Dupleix felt this blockade inconveniencing him, he sent out a sally under La Tour who scattered the besiegers and made them fall back on San Thome. Another French captain, Paradis, was bringing up reinforcements and found his way barred by the Nawab's troops near San Thome. Paradis cleared his way and dispersed these troops in a quick, brief encounter as easily as La Tour had done

previously. As a result the Nawab withdrew and later made peace with Pondicherry. These two brief encounters were major events in Indian history. The European and Indian forces had met on the battle-field several times before, but Europeans had not proved intrinsically superior to the Indians before this. Contingents of Portuguese troops loaned to Bahadur Shah of Gujarat conferred no advantage upon him against Humayun. Shah Jahan defeated the Portuguese at Hugli quite easily. Similarly 'Alamgir meted out severe punishment to the East India Company. But during the War of Austrian Succession small units of European infantry with their artillery could confront and defy numerically superior but ill-disciplined troops of Indian cavalry, which still formed the backbone of Indian armies. The European armies had made certain developments in their military technique during recent years, especially during the War of Spanish Succession. The Mughul army on the other hand had deteriorated.

The Europeans were no longer depending entirely upon cavalry in their wars. Infantry had gradually taken the place of cavalry as the mainstay of their forces. The use of cavalry was restricted to making out-flanking movements or to the pursuit of the enemy troops when broken and in flight. The European infantry at this time did not make deep formations and was spread out thinly. This ensured better use of all troops with a longer line than the traditional methods of warfare provided, and decreased casualties when under fire.

European infantrymen now used a rifle which fixed the bayonet outside the muzzle rather than in it as heretofore in vogue; this enabled them to engage in hand to hand conflict and fire, if need be, simultaneously. The Indians still fixed bayonets inside the muzzle of their rifles. The European artillery was far ahead of the Indian. Their gun was now made of thinner metal, and was shorter in length with a wider muzzle than the

traditional seventeenth century gun in use all over the world. It was lighter and more mobile, fired twice a minute and, above all, the Europeans had taken to firing grape-shot which wrought heavy carnage in the crowded enemy ranks. The Indian gun was still of the old style, made of thick heavy metal, tapering at the mouth ; it fired once in five minutes and the Indians still used round solid balls.

The European infantry, furthermore, was well disciplined, properly organised, fighting in uniforms and amenable to instructions even in the thick of the fighting.

As a result we find the European troops achieving quick and decisive successes when engaged against the Indian cavalry. After the engagements outside Madras described above, we find Dupleix defeating the Nawab again at Ambur and defeating Nasir Jang later. We find Clive achieving similar successes fraught with greater consequences, first at Calcutta and then at Plassey.

Major Munro's successes at Buxar and other victories of the English against various local powers can mainly be ascribed to this technical superiority in the mideighteenth century of the European military organization and equipment. It was maintained and in fact increased during the course of time. Why the Indian powers were not able to keep up with the European nations in technical developments, however small, in the eighteenth century is a pertinent though unanswerable question. One thing, however, is quite clear, the creative impulse had definitely passed to the West. The spirit of enquiry, the zest for knowledge, the demand of adventure, the mental attitude of refusing to take things for granted and other intellectual impulses born with the great European Renaissance a few centuries earlier, were now bearing fruit. The East was not affected by any similar current. India, moreover, clung to the past, and respect for tradition lay heavy

on her. Her people were satisfied if things were done in the way they had been done in the time of their forefathers. Such mental attitudes hardly make for progress. In the military sphere, as late as the nineteenth century, we find Ranjit Singh hard put to it to wean away his *sardars* from entire dependence upon the cavalry.

The disunity at the court of Siraj-ud-Daulah, the disloyalty of Mir Ja'far and the Hindu bankers and Clive's intrigue and shady dealings are well-known factors, but they could not have proved so disastrous to Muslim rule without British superiority in military technique. The Muslim armies which opposed the British at Plassey and at Buxar were disunited ; British intrigue had undermined their solidarity ; lack of patriotism and loyalty were potent causes of defeat, and, yet they might have succeeded if their military equipment and strategy had not been defective.

The Bengal of that day roughly comprised the modern provinces of East Pakistan, West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and parts of Assam. The victory at Plassey in 1757 may be described as a great turning point in the political and economic history of Bengal.

British rule over Bengal was a great calamity. In the mideighteenth century Bengal was a prosperous province, rich in agriculture and industries. Its trade was extensive. Muslim and Hindu merchants carried on a brisk trade with the interior of the country, with lands on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts of the sub continent, and with Turkey, Arabia, Persia, Tibet, China, Japan and the East Indies. The chief exports were cotton and silk piece-goods, raw silk, salt, saltpetre, jute, sugar and opium. The balance of trade was heavily in favour of Bengal. The excess of exports over imports had to be paid for in bullion. Thus there was a great influx of gold in the province in the first half of the eighteenth century.

European companies also took part in this trade.

They found the fine cotton cloth of Bengal, especially Dacca muslin, in great demand and sold it in large quantities in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea ports. The Dutch exports of raw silk from Bengal are estimated to have valued three quarters of a million pounds annually. The English Company's investments in Bengal exports were heavy.

A few decades of British rule sufficed to impoverish and ruin this great province and its people. The drain started with successive Nawabs paying huge sums of money to the Company of its servants for gaining or retaining the throne of Bengal. It is estimated that between 1757 and 1765 these presents amounted to five million pounds sterling. After the grant of *diwani* in 1765, the surplus revenues of Bengal were invested in the Company's exports. In fifteen years these investments exceeded ten million pounds sterling. Bullion was exported to China in large quantities. In one form or another a large part of the wealth of Bengal found its way to England. The Company's servants retired to England with huge fortunes made in short terms of service. The East India Company obtained the Emperor's *farman* permitting them to trade duty free with Bengal. The Company started claiming exemption from duty even in their inland trade. The Company's *dastaks* (permits) were also used by their servants in their private trade; they were also sold to Indian merchants who brought them to escape customs duties. The complaints of Siraj-ud-Daulah and Mir Ja'far were fruitless. Mir Qasim fought the Company and lost his throne on this issue. The East India Company and its servants came to monopolise the entire inland trade of Bengal, thus impoverishing the province and ruining the Indian merchants. The competitors being ousted from the field, the Company sold their goods at their own inflated prices.

In order to ensure constant and sufficient supply, the Company and its servants began to enter into forward

contracts with the weavers to supply stipulated quantities of cloth at specified rates to be delivered on fixed dates. In fixing the rates the natural law of supply and demand was not allowed to function. The Company's servants armed with authority forced the skilled workers to sign contracts at rates below subsistence level and compelled them to fulfil these undertakings; the defaulters being jailed or flogged. This was a great instrument of oppression. The Company's servants themselves laid down the wages of the workers, determined the quantity the weavers had to supply and themselves punished any infringements of these conditions. The workers were reduced virtually to the condition of slaves, and successful flight was their only feasible remedy. Some weavers cut off their own fingers to escape this tyranny. The cotton and silk manufacturing industries were completely ruined.

Competition from English textile manufacturers became gradually strong and severe. Two laws passed by the British Parliament in 1700 and 1720 had laid down that cotton and silk goods imported from India "could not be worn or otherwise used in England." Consequently Bengal textiles were constantly re-exported to European countries, where they were in great demand. But the British wars in Europe in the eighteenth century and especially the War of American Independence followed by the long drawn out French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars put a stop to this trade. In 1779 there was a severe fall in the export of Bengal cotton cloth to European countries. In 1780 the Directors of the East India Company agreed to stop the import of printed cotton cloth from Bengal for four years on representations from the British calico printers.

The progress of the Industrial Revolution in England and the application of power to the spinning and weaving machinery made it possible for the British textile manufacturers to under sell the Indian products in the Indian markets. This sounded the death knell of the native

industries. Henceforth Indian exports to British consisted only of raw cotton.

The misrule of the early period of British dominion in Bengal and the consequent political instability, lack of capital and monopoly of trade and banking did not make for conditions that could encourage a revival or improvement in the sphere of manufactures.

Clive's victory at Plassey in 1757, which transferred the political control of Bengal into the hands of the East India Company and set the province on the road to economic ruin, also clarified British policy in India. The conspiracy that led to the defeat and dethronement of Siraj-ud-Daulah brought the English and the Hindus together. This Hindu-British alliance against the prevailing Muslim rule was neither accidental nor short-lived.

Sovereign power in the Indo-Pakistan sub continent had rested in the person of the Muslim rulers for nearly seven centuries. Sometimes the Muslim Empire unified large portions of this sub continent and controlled them from a single centre, at other times the Empire disintegrated into smaller units, but Muslim supremacy was established in tradition and its recognition was both widespread and deep-rooted. The Mughul Emperor at Delhi, without wealth and power, incapable of rewarding service or punishing contumacy, continued in the eighteenth century to be the repository of immense prestige. Muslim *mansabdars* who carved principalities for themselves out of the ruins of the once great Mughul Empire continued to seek recognition of their titles at Delhi, even in provinces as far away from the capital as Bengal and the Deccan. The independent Nawabs of Oudh prided themselves on the title of *Wazir*. As late as 1765 even the English in Bengal, who already exercised full powers of *diwani* had the position regularized by a grant from the Emperor. Mahadaji Sindhia forced Shah 'Alam II to grant his chief, the Peshwa

the title of the Vicegerent of the Empire. Such in fact, was the prestige of the Muslim sovereignty that in the middle of the nineteenth century, when there was an armed uprising against the British *raj*, the most natural person who could be thought of to function as the Emperor of India, was the old, decrepit, effete Bahadar Shah of Delhi.

In the conspiracy that culminated in the defeat and dethronement of Siraj-ud-Daulah, the people chiefly concerned were the great Hindu bankers, the *seths*. They had supported 'Ali Vardi Khan, but Siraj-ud-Daulah had antagonised them. They were joined by other discontented elements at the court of the Nawab, people like Rai Durlabh who had been demoted from the office of *diwan*. The English were contacted and after careful consultation they fell in line with the conspirators at their own terms. But when a successor to Siraj-ud-Daulah was sought, we find that the conspirators had to find a Muslim to fill the *masnad* of Bengal. Hindus could not be considered. Shaukat Jang of Purnia was dead. Yar Lutf Khan was the recommendation of the *seths*. Mir Ja'far was in fact agreed upon.

Mir Ja'far, however, necessary and convenient he may have been to the conspirators, remained, in fact, a figurehead of the Bengal administration, the real power having passed into the hands of the English and being exercised for the good of themselves and that of their allies, the Hindus. Clive was not slow to show his hand. When Ja'far wanted to remove from office Ram Narayan, his deputy at Patna, and Rai Durlabh, Clive interfered strongly and effectively to prevent Mir Ja'far from executing his own policy.

Thus right at the outset of British dominion in India was born the Hindu-British alliance.

The British found in the Hindus their natural allies and in the Muslims their natural enemies. It was Muslim rule and the prestige of Muslim sovereignty that was in

the process of being undermined and eliminated in India. The British were stepping into the Muslim shoes. The Hindus had long been under the domination of a faith alien to the Hindu philosophy and code of life, and one which the resilient Hindu civilization had, for once, failed to absorb in its fold. The Hindus were resurgent. Their aims coincided with the expediency of the British. From Clive to Mountbatten we can trace the clear stream of pro-Hindu and anti-Muslim policy of the British in India. This policy ultimately became responsible for the economic, intellectual and political ruin of the Indian Muslims, who for over seven hundred years had provided the intellectual economic and political leadership in this sub continent.

Territorial power in Bengal proved the first step on a perennial march in the same direction for the Company. This march was more rapid during the terms of office of Wellesley, Lord Hastings, and Dalhousie. The statutory injunction of Pitt's India Act that "to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour and policy of this nation" is notable more for its breach than observance by the Company's servants in India. The sub continent was in a state of flux and there was no political stability. The Duke of Wellington remarks in extenuation of the conduct of the Company's servants that "no such thing as a frontier really existed." Sir John Malcolm describes the political situation as a dilemma between intervention and destruction. These remarks are exaggerations. The temptation offered by the weakness of the Indian rulers was the real cause of British expansion. The Company's territorial responsibility increased rapidly, until by the middle of the nineteenth century it held its sway over the entire span of the Indo-Pakistan sub continent and Burma.

In the sphere of the Company's constitution we find a change parallel to its responsibilities in India. When

it became a territorial power the British government and Parliament began to take a keen interest in its affairs. This interest was further excited by the wealth brought home by the servants of the Company, the " nabobs " of eighteenth century caricature and literature, and by their misgovernment in Bengal. This interest resulted in the gradual extension of control by the British government over the Company's affairs, a process which quickly culminated in 1784 by placing the entire political and military policy of the Company in India, in the hands of a small official body in London, the Board of Control.

In short the history of the East India Company during this period is a story of the rise to power of a well organised and energetic trading corporation, helped in the process by the political instability and weakness of contemporary India, the scientific developments in Europe applied to the art of war, the intellectual stagnation of the East, and British superiority at sea ; it was tarnished by gross misgovernment and oppression of the native inhabitants in the earlier period and was characterised by a consistent, though natural, hostility towards the Muslim nation which heretofore had been the repository of power and leadership.

CHAPTER XIII

HAIDAR 'ALI

A Muslim as well as a foreigner, without any political footing whatsoever, Haidar 'Ali raised himself by sheer merit from obscurity to the supreme position in the Hindu kingdom of Mysore and through his vigour and energy brought that small and obscure state into the lime-light of history ; yet he will chiefly be remembered as a stubborn fighter against foreign domination. As an inveterate enemy of the English, he initiated an anti-British policy and left it as a legacy to his son and successor, Tipu Sultan and, though this policy failed in the face of heavy odds, it won the father and the son the admiration and respect of posterity as champions of freedom against foreign rule.

Haidar 'Ali's family claimed descent from the *Quraish*. According to their accounts, one of his ancestors came to India from Baghdad and Wali Muhammad, the great-grand-father of Haidar 'Ali, migrated from Delhi to Gulbarga. Haidar 'Ali's grandfather Muhammad 'Ali moved down to Kolar and settled there. His four sons became soldiers of fortune. Fath Muhammad, Haidar 'Ali's father, served for some time in Arcot and in Mysore and obtained the rank of *naik*. Then he went to Sira¹ and rose to some prominence as a commander of 400 foot and 100 horse under the imperial *subahdar*, Nawab Dargah Quli Khan, who gave him charge of Dadballapur. After Dargah Quli's death Fath Muhammad attached himself to his son 'Abdur Rasul and was killed in a fight between the former and Tahir Khan over the possession of Sira in 1778.² He left behind

¹ Sira is a town in Tumluk district in Mysore. It formed part of the Mughul Empire under 'Alamgir and was the seat of an imperial *subahdar*.

² Kirmani, *Nishan-i-Haidari*, pp. 6-13.

two sons, Shahbaz and Haidar 'Ali. Haidar was born at Dadballapur in 1727. His mother was the daughter of a *navayat*¹ merchant.

After Fath Muhammad's death, Shahbaz and Haidar 'Ali were persecuted by 'Abbas Quli, a son of Dargah Quli, for their inability to pay their father's debt. Haidar 'Ali's uncle Haidar Sahib, however, through the influence of his patron Devraj, commander-in-chief of Mysore, brought them to Seringapatam. When they grew up they served for some time 'Abdul Wahhab, younger brother of Nawab Muhammad 'Ali and *jagirdar* of Chittur. They then entered the service of Nanjraj, then the *sarvadhikari* of Mysore, who gave Shahbaz command of 300 foot and 50 horse. After a short while Haidar Sahib died and Shahbaz succeeded to his uncle's command.²

It appears that till then Haidar 'Ali was attached to his elder brother's command. A bold and dashing soldier he distinguished himself in the siege of Devanahalli and so impressed Nanjraj that the latter conferred on him the title of *Khan* and an independent command of 200 foot and 50 horse. Haidar 'Ali thus saw his foot near the ladder that was to carry him higher and higher. In 1750 Haidar 'Ali accompanied the Mysore army under Varakki Venkat Rao to help the Nizam Nasir Jang against his nephew Muzaffar Jang. Though victorious in the war, Nasir Jang was treacherously assassinated by the Pathan Nawab of Cuddapah. In the confusion, which followed Nasir's treasure fell into the hands of his allies, the French and Haidar 'Ali. This wealth enabled Haidar 'Ali to increase his troops and to recruit French deserters to train his soldiers in European methods of warfare.

Haidar 'Ali's newly introduced firearms greatly impressed Nanjaraj and in 1752 the latter associated him

¹ *Navayat* or new-comer were the descendants of the Arabs who came to southern India as merchants and settled there.

² Kirmani, p. 16.

with his campaign in Trichinopoly to help Muhammad 'Ali against Chanda Sahib and the French. Aided by the Mysoreans and the English, Muhammad 'Ali triumphed over his rival, but to the great disappointment of Nanjaraj, he broke his promise of ceding Trichinopoly to Mysore, giving only the small island of Seringham in return for the liberal Mysore aid. Enraged Nanjaraj joined the French and throughout the year 1753 and 1754 made strenuous but vain attempts to capture Trichinopoly.

Although the Trichinopoly campaigns were militarily and financially a disaster to Nanjaraj, they proved a blessing in disguise to his lieutenant Haidar 'Ali. He obtained a first hand knowledge of European methods of warfare. Moreover, in these campaigns Haidar 'Ali played a distinguished role and earned the appreciation of his patron and the French.¹ In recognition of his merit, Nanjaraj appointed him in 1755 as the *faujdar* of Dindigul, which needed a strong man to subdue the refractory *poligars* of the district and also to check the ambitions of Muhammad 'Ali and his ally, the English, East India Company, over that region. With 1500 horse, 3000 infantry, 2000 peons and 4 guns under him, Haidar 'Ali obtained an independent command.

By skilful diplomacy, Haidar 'Ali isolated the *poligars*² who could otherwise put into the field no less than 30,000 troops, and crushed them one by one. In this way he succeeded in establishing law and order in that distracted district. He also greatly increased his wealth and army, organised his artillery and established an arsenal under the supervision of French engineers. Thenceforth his rise was rapid and in three years he became sole arbiter of the destiny of Mysore.

Haidar 'Ali's rise to the supreme position in Mysore was due to his energy, daring and enterprise. Circumstances such as internal and external complications,

¹ Dupleix is said to have sent Haidar 'Ali a present.

² Military chieftains who held territory in return for military services to the king.

no doubt played some part in his success but it was his ability that he made him master of the circumstances and moulded them into instruments for his advancement in life. Like Napoleon Bonaparte, Haidar 'Ali was quick to grasp a situation and knew to strike at the right time. Hence he triumphed where a man with lesser qualities would have perished.

The government of Mysore was in the hands of two Brahmin brothers, Devraj and Nanjaraj, who had usurped the supreme authority and reduced the reigning king Chikka Krishnaraja to a puppet. Devraj, the elder, was *duwai* or commander-in-chief and Nanjaraj, the younger, was *sarvadhikari*, controlling revenue and finance. To this internal anomaly were added the external complications caused by the ambitions of the Nizam and the Marathas. The Nizam claimed sovereignty over Mysore as it formed part of 'Alamgir's Empire. The Marathas claimed *chauth* from it and considered it within their legitimate sphere of influence. Some of its important forts were included in Shivaji's kingdom. In view of this, the Mysore government had to pay a large tribute to the Nizam and the Peshwa in order to keep them in humour.

The expensive Trichinopoly campaigns and the invasion of the Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao and Salabat Jang in 1755 which could be warded off only on the payment of nearly a crore of rupees shattered the financial fabric of Mysore, discredited the regime of Devraj and Nanjaraj and brought out Haidar 'Ali as the only saviour of the kingdom. This encouraged the king to attempt twice, once in 1755 and again in 1756, to free himself from the tutelage of the Brahmins. Of course, these attempts failed and resulted in the strict surveillance of the king in his palace; but they greatly undermined the position of the two brothers and gave occasion for differences between them, which led in February 1757 to Devraj's retirement and left Nanjaraj absolute in the state.

Sadasiva Rao Bhao's invasion of 1757 left Mysore so bankrupt that the soldiers could not be paid and there was a mutiny in the army. At this critical time for Nanjaraj, Haidar 'Ali came to the rescue of his patron. He effected a reconciliation between Devraj and Nanjaraj ; but Devraj died shortly afterwards. With the co-operation of his *diwan* Khande Rao, Haidar 'Ali paid the arrears due to the soldiers by distributing among them public property and even the elephants and horses of the king's retinue and thus eased the situation.

Haidar 'Ali saved the State from collapse and this increased his popularity particularly with the army. The king also looked upon him as his sole protector against Nanjaraj. Haidar 'Ali was conscious of the strength of his position ; but he did not oust Nanjaraj.

The Maratha invasion of 1758 gave Haidar 'Ali the opportunity he needed. The Maratha chief, Gopal Rao Patwardhan had overrun Bangalore, Kolar, Devanhalli, Hoskote and Channapatna and come within 40 miles of Seringapatam. At this crisis, Haidar 'Ali, who was entrusted with the supreme command of the army, recovered Channapatna and Bangalore and obliged the Marathas to withdraw on payment of 16 lakhs of rupees in cash and a promise to pay another sixteen lakhs later. Haider 'Ali took 13 *taluks* under his own direct management so that their revenues might be utilized to liquidate the debt. In this warfare with the Marathas, Haidar 'Ali did not actually win a victory. But the relief of Channapatna and Bangalore were exploited by Haidar 'Ali and he was welcomed as a saviour who brought peace with honour.

The Maratha invasion shattered the finances of Mysore ; the State was unable to defray even the routine expenses of administration. The pay of the soldiers had fallen into arrears and confusion prevailed everywhere, The soldiers sat in a *dharna* at the door of Nanjaraj demanding arrears of pay. Unable to cope with the problem, Nanjaraj

¹ *Dharna* is an old Hindu custom. A creditor sits at the door of the debtor for days together until the debt is discharged.

decided to retire from his high office. With the concurrence of the king, Haidar 'Ali, who was at this time at the height of his popularity with the army and had completely made himself master of the situation, quietly occupied the supreme position in the government. In order to pay the arrears and provide regular payment to the troops, he obtained additional assignments and thus had in his direct possessions more than half of the kingdom of Mysore. Nanjaraj retired to the town of Mysore, but he was afterwards forced to withdraw to Coonoor.

For expenses incurred in the expedition against Nanjaraj and for maintaining an effective defence, Haidar 'Ali demanded further assignments. Khande Rao, who was Haidar 'Ali's *diwan* and who also became *pradhan* after Nanjaraj's retirement opposed this. Haidar Ali, however, secured four more districts for his block of territory. But this episode brought about an estrangement between Haidar 'Ali and Khande Rao and the latter formed a conspiracy to oust his patron and step into his shoes. The king who felt that the change had simply changed his master, readily joined it. Khande Rao persuaded the Maratha chief Visali Pandit to join him and planned a concerted attack on Haidar 'Ali.

Khande Rao chose a favourable moment to strike at Haidar 'Ali. Most of Haidar 'Ali's troops had gone on distant campaigns when, on August 12, 1760, Khande Rao made a surprise attack on him and killed a large number of his soldiers. Haidar 'Ali had to flee from Seringapatam. However, he retained his hold on Bangalore, Anekal, Dindigul and Baramahal. But as he was hemmed in by the Marathas, his career seemed to approach its end. About this time, the news of the Maratha disaster at Panipat in 1761 came as a relief to him, because it diverted Visali Pandit's attention from the south to the

north and the Maratha chief made peace with him. Haidar 'Ali paid him 5 lakhs of rupees and promised to cede Baramahal.

Even after the withdrawal of the Marathas, the royalists enjoyed superiority in numbers and Khande Rao defeated Haidar 'Ali at Soqile on the Kavari. Haidar 'Ali, however, strengthened himself by effecting a reconciliation with Nanjaraj at Coonoor and their combined army met Khande Rao at Kattenmalavadi. By means of secret letters, Haidar 'Ali aroused suspicions in the mind of Khande Rao about the loyalty of his army chief and secured his flight from the field. He pursued him to Seringapatam and laid siege to the capital. A strict blockade placed the city in such a precarious position that the king had to agree to Haidar 'Ali's demand for absolute surrender (1761).

Haidar 'Ali entered Seringapatam in triumph and became the absolute master of Mysore. He assigned territory worth 3 lakhs to the king and one lakh to Nanjaraj, while he himself assumed the management of the rest of Mysore. Khande Rao was put in a cage and he died at Bangalore after a year. Thus by his resourcefulness and daring Haidar 'Ali became the undisputed ruler of Mysore.

After consolidating his position, Haidar 'Ali launched upon a career of conquest, and although he suffered set-backs on account of three Maratha invasions (1764-72), he succeeded by 1778 in carving out for himself an extensive domain.

The expansion of his territories began with the conquest of Sira and Hoskote. In 1761 he helped Nizam 'Ali's brother and rival, Basalat Jang, to conquer these places from the Maratha chiefs on his agreeing to invest him with the office of the Nawab of Sira. After their capture, however, Haidar 'Ali occupied them with his own troops and gave only a small part of the artillery and ammunition captured from the Marathas to Basalat

Jang. This was followed by the conquest of the dependencies of Sira. In a short time, Haidar 'Ali reduced the *poligars* of Chik Ballapur, Rayadurgu, Harpanhalli and Chitaldrug and compelled them to pay him tribute.

The conquest of the kingdom of Bednur is an important event in the career of Haidar 'Ali. When he was at Chitaldrug, Chen Visaviyya, an adopted son of Baswappa Nayak, the late king of Bednur, solicited his help against the dowager queen, who wanted her brother to become king. Haidar 'Ali already had an eye on the small but wealthy and prosperous kingdom. On the pretence of restoring the legitimate ruler, he invaded Bednur in 1763 and occupied it. Haidar 'Ali treated the country as his own territory and sent the dowager queen and Chen Visaviyya to live in Maddagiri, a hill fort in eastern Mysore. Everywhere in Mysore, Haidar 'Ali ruled in the name of the king; Bednur he regarded as his *swarajya*. Bednur was named Haidarnagar and proclaimed as his capital. Here for the first time he asserted the right of striking coins and issued his earliest coin, the so-called *Bahaduri pagoda*. He was, however, extremely cautious; he exhibited only the initial letters of his name; and by associating his coinage with Hindu deities, he undoubtedly showed remarkable tolerance to the Hindus.

The occupation of Bednur added to Haidar 'Ali's wealth and resources. The booty of Bednur fort alone is said to have brought him 12 million sterling. Immediately after this, Haidar 'Ali wrested Sunda, north of Bednur, from its ruler Savai Immadi Sadasiva (1763).

The conquest of Malabar from the *Zamorin* and the *Nairs*, the fighting section of the people and the feudal aristocracy of the country, was Haidar 'Ali's most arduous feat of arms. As the *faujdar* of Dindigul in 1758, he had conquered some districts of Malabar. In 1756, Haidar 'Ali invaded Malabar both by land and sea and occupied the whole country. In 1769 when he was engaged in fighting the English, the *Nairs* rebelled and

he had to abandon Malabar on the payment of 1,200,000 rupees by the *Zamorin*. In 1773, however, Haidar 'Ali reconquered Malabar and forced the rulers of Cochin and Kranganur to pay him a large tribute.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, two factors governed the political situation in south India, the deep-rooted Maratha-Mysore rivalry for supremacy in the south and British hostility towards Haidar 'Ali. By skilful diplomacy, the British succeeded in playing one against the other and thus clearing their way to supremacy in India.

Geographically and traditionally, Haidar 'Ali and the Marathas were rivals. The Marathas considered Mysore as their legitimate field for expansion and viewed Haidar 'Ali's strength as a great barrier to their designs, because their interest lay in keeping Mysore weak and disorganised. On the other hand, Haidar 'Ali also had his ambitions which could be realised only by an expansion in the south, much of which however was either directly or indirectly under the Maratha chiefs. Hence a conflict between the two was inevitable.

The Maratha diversion from the south to the north after the disaster of Panipat gave Haidar 'Ali an opportunity to conquer Sira, Hoskote, Bednur, Sunda and other places. He also tried to bring Sevanur, Karnool and Kurpa within the orbit of his influence and from what has been described as a 'defensive cordon', Haidar 'Ali even advanced beyond the Tungabhadra and occupied Dhanwar and Bankapur. He soon found, however, a formidable antagonist in the Peshwa Madhav Rao, one of the important generals of the Marathas, whose three expeditions against Mysore caused great embarrassment to Haidar 'Ali.

On an appeal for help by the dispossessed Pathan chief of Sevanur, the young and ambitious Peshwa Madhav Rao, son and successor of Balaji Baji Rao, advanced against Haidar 'Ali and defeated him at Ratenhalli near Sevanur in May 1764. The Maratha chief

pursued him to the woods of Bednur and forced him to sue for peace. Haidar 'Ali had to pay an indemnity of 28 lakhs of rupees, restore Sevanur and Gooty and give up the *taluks* of Bankapur, Harihar and Basavapatna.

In 1766 Madhav Rao induced Nizam 'Ali to join him in a scheme of offensive alliance against Haidar 'Ali. About this time the Nizam formed an alliance with the British and strengthened himself with the help of an English auxiliary force so that he might obtain his due share of Mysore in the joint action. Madhav Rao, however, could not be so easily overreached. Early, in 1767 he crossed the Krishna and fell on Haidar 'Ali's territory. Haidar 'Ali avoided pitched battles and adopted the policy of harassing the enemy. Madhav, however, took possession of Sira by inducing its commandant Mir 'Ali Raza, a brother-in-law of Haidar 'Ali to desert him. He also captured in quick succession Maddagiri, Madaksiran, Dadballapur, Chick Ballapur, Devanhalli, Hoskote and Kolar.

Alarmed at 'Ali Raza's defection and Nizam's advance, Haidar 'Ali sued for peace. Madhav also wanted to come to terms before the Nizam could join in sharing the spoil. Haidar 'Ali agreed to pay 33 lakhs of rupees and the Marathas promised to restore to him Sira, Hoskote, Chick Ballapur, Kolar and some other places. Being thus outwitted by Madhav, the Nizam was easily persuaded by Haidar 'Ali to abandon his anti-Mysore attitude and to be friendly towards him.

Neither Madhav nor Haidar 'Ali observed the treaty obligations. Madhav did not restore to Haidar 'Ali Sira, Hoskote and Chik Ballapur. Moreover, his dependent chief of Chik Ballapur had taken into service some of Haidar 'Ali's dissatisfied men and had fomented troubles in his territory. Haidar 'Ali, on the other hand, maintained secret communications with Madhav Rao's uncle Raghunath Rao and Janoji Bhonsle to the great embarrassment of the Peshwa and

forcibly seized Chik Ballapur and Talpur. Besides, Haidar 'Ali did not pay two years' tribute to the Peshwa.

In 1769 Madhav formed a confederacy of the Maratha chiefs and advanced for the third time with the intention of destroying Haidar 'Ali. Rejoined by 'Ali Raza and expecting aid from the British on the strength of the recently concluded treaty with them, Haidar 'Ali, made preparations to oppose the Marathas. In spite of repeated demands the British aid did not come and he had to face alone the vast enemy forces which, caring little for his scorched earth policy, captured Nijagal and knocked at the gate of Bangalore. About this time Madhav fell ill and returned to Poona leaving his maternal uncle, Trimbak Rao in command. On March 5, 1771 Trimbak turned a night attack of Haidar 'Ali into a rout. In the general confusion many officers of Haidar 'Ali were either killed or taken prisoner. Tipu Sultan also seemed lost in the confusion; he managed to escape, however, and join his father at Seringapatam.

Following his victory, Trimbak laid siege to Seringapatam, but failed to capture it. The Maratha host however continued to hold the greater part of Mysore. Despairing of getting rid of the enemy, Haidar 'Ali had to agree to a humiliating treaty in July 1772. He paid the Marathas 29 lakhs of rupees in cash and promised to pay 21 lakhs afterwards. The Marathas retained Sira, Hoskote, Dadballapur, Kolar, Maddagiri and Gurumkunda and returned the rest of the territories to Haidar 'Ali.

Haidar 'Ali's defeat at the hands of the Marathas in 1769-72 and the humiliating peace of 1772 were an inglorious chapter in his career. It also contributed greatly to the development of his subsequent anti-British policy. His statements reveal it. In 1775 he said "I wasted several years of my life in believing that England was a great nation." In 1782 Haidar 'Ali

spoke to the British *wakil* Srinivas, "When the Marathas had entered my country, I wrote them in a variety of ways desiring them to send succour. In reply they first told me that they would send help and after some time they said that they have written to Europe and expected orders from thence. To this I urged that it would be a year and six months before their orders could be obtained from Europe and what use would their succour be then. The Governor's answer was that without orders from Europe they could do nothing and yet at length after a long time had elapsed they pretended that till then they had received no order."¹

Haidar 'Ali, nevertheless, quickly recovered from the set-back. The dissensions among the Marathas after Madhav's death in November 1772 on account of the dispute regarding the succession to the throne between his son and successor Narayan Rao and uncle Raghunath Rao, the assassination of the former, the usurpation of the *gaddi* of the Peshwa by the latter in April 1773 and the opposition of the astute Brahmin minister Nana Farnavis gave Haidar 'Ali an opportunity to recover his possessions. Raghunath was also eager to secure his friendship against the ministerial party. By a treaty in February 1774, he ceded to Haidar 'Ali the territory conquered by Madhav on Haidar 'Ali's recognition of him as Peshwa and on his promise to pay an annual tribute of 6 lakhs. This enabled Haidar 'Ali to recover and conquer Sira, Maddagiri, Dadballapur, Hoskote, Gurumkunda, Ballary, Cuddapah, Karnool and Gooty. The occupation of these places eliminated Maratha influence to the south of the Tungabhadra and established Haidar 'Ali's complete way over that region.

The respite thus obtained also enabled Haidar 'Ali to conquer Coorg and reconquer Malabar. The possession of Coorg, a small mountainous district between Mysore and Malabar, was an essential

¹ Sinha, pp. 113 and 135.

preliminary to the permanent occupation of Malabar. After his abortive expedition in 1765, Haidar 'Ali obtained his opportunity in 1773 to conquer Coorg. There was a succession dispute in Coorg and Linga Raja, uncle of one of the claimants to the throne, sought his aid. Haider 'Ali proceeded with a large force and, intriguing with both sides, easily occupied the whole of Coorg and annexed it to Mysore. After this Haidar 'Ali sent a force to Calicut and conquered the whole of Malabar.

In recognising Raghunath as Peshwa, Haidar 'Ali had naturally alienated Nana Farnavis who supported the claims of the murdered Narayan Rao's posthumous son to the leadership of the Marathas. Farnavis formed a coalition with the Nizam against Haidar 'Ali. Their combined army was, however, beaten by Haidar 'Ali's commander Muhammad 'Ali at Saunsi near Sevanur in 1776. To retrieve the situation the Poona government sent in the following year a vast force under Parsuram Bhao and Haripant. But this force also suffered reverses and had to retreat to the other side of the Tungabhadra. Following his advantage Haidar 'Ali captured Kopal, Gajandragarh, Dharwar, Chitaldrug and Cuddapah and thus by 1779 established his sovereignty in the region between the Tungabhadra and the Krishna.

The year 1779 is a turning point in Haidar 'Ali's career, because it saw the end of the anti-Maratha phase of his foreign policy. From this time onwards his career is to be studied as a part of the wider conflict against British ascendancy in India. With this change in his foreign policy there took place in southern Indian politics a diplomatic revolution which brought about an unexpected alliance between Haidar 'Ali and his enemies the Maratha government at Poona against the English in India.

Although in his early years Haidar 'Ali's close association with the French gave him an anti-British bias, yet he cannot be said to have followed an anti-British and pro-French policy in his relations with these two rival European powers in India. It was rather the principle of self-interest which governed his policy. Haidar 'Ali was attached to the French because they had shown greater friendship. He supported the French in the Anglo-French War and sent aid to the beleaguered city of Pondicherry when Count de Lally sought his help, because he also expected to acquire Trichinopoly, Madura, Tinnevely and some other places in the Carnatic. On account of Khande Rao's expedition Haidar 'Ali, however, could not give effective aid to the French and when he recovered his position in May 1761, French power had already been shattered by the British.

To prevent Haidar 'Ali from giving effective aid to the French, the Madras government also indulged in hostile activities against him. They directed Yusuf Khan from Tanjore to make incursions into Mysore and Captain Richard Smith captured Karur. They even negotiated for an alliance with Khande Rao. So when Haidar 'Ali recovered his power, he could not altogether forget that, at a most critical time of his career, the British were about to join his mortal enemy, Khande Rao. Besides, because Haidar 'Ali wanted to train his army in European methods of warfare, French influence increased at his court. After the collapse of Lally's schemes, many French army chiefs, Alain, Hugal, Colonel Due Muy, Mons and De La Tour and a large number of French soldiers entered Haidar 'Ali's service and he earned the reputation of being a patron to the scattered French nation in India.

Although the events of 1760-61 were not conducive to better relations, yet they did not bring about enmity between Haidar 'Ali and the British. Even after

this the Bombay government obtained from him the exclusive right to purchase pepper in Bednur, agreeing to pay its price in gunpowder, lead and saltpetre. An understanding was, however, prevented by the personal dislike and enmity that existed between Haidar 'Ali and Nawab Muhammad 'Ali, the protege of the British. Both of them claimed much of each other's territory. Moreover, to the great irritation and apprehension of Haidar 'Ali, British troops were cantoned at Vellore. On the other hand, Haidar 'Ali gave shelter to Muhammad 'Ali's rivals, his elder brother Mahfuz Khan and Chanda Sahib's son Raja Sahib. The English, however did not like to go to war against Haidar 'Ali on account of Muhammad 'Ali, because they feared that in that case Nizam 'Ali would join Haidar 'Ali and this would injure British influence in Hyderabad.

Haidar 'Ali also wanted to be at peace with the English. He even desired to have a friendly alliance with them. In July 1766 he made an offer in the following words, "I have got a large force. The British have the same. If both be united, the Moghullians and the Marathas can do nothing."¹ After this the Madras government sent Bouchier as an envoy to Haidar 'Ali. About this time Haidar 'Ali was negotiating with the Nizam and Bouchier could not have an interview with him. The English feared that Haidar 'Ali and the Nizam might invade the Carnatic. Hence they became anxious to come to terms with the Nizam. They stole a march upon Haidar 'Ali and on November 12, 1766 concluded with the Nizam a treaty with the purpose of checking the rising power of Haidar 'Ali and reducing Mysore to its old boundaries. So, British policy was becoming hostile to Haidar 'Ali, and in the Madhav-Nizam offensive alliance of 1766, the English helped the latter with an auxiliary force. It has been mentioned how the Nizam was outwitted by the Marathas and won over by Haidar 'Ali. The British now found

¹ Sinha, p. 64.

themselves in a very difficult position. The Madras government antagonised both Haidar 'Ali and the Marathas, and then was deserted by the Nizam. It was thus completely isolated and confronted with Haidar 'Ali-Nizam alliance. So, the Court of Directors observed, "You have brought us to such a labyrinth of difficulties that we do not see how we shall be extricated from them."

In August 1767 the combined armies of Haidar 'Ali and Nizam 'Ali invaded the Carnatic, but the English commander on the frontier, Colonel Joseph Smith, repulsed them in a battle near the fort of Changama on August 31. Even after this, the allied forces entered into Carnatic and approached Trinomali before Smith could reach there. A detachment of Haidar 'Ali's cavalry under Tipu advanced to St. Thomas' Mount and threw the inhabitants of Madras into the greatest consternation. The governor, the members of the council and Muhammad 'Ali ran away from Madras for safety.

After many moves and counter-moves, the allies and the English met at Trinomali on September 26, 1767. By tactful manœuvring, Smith forced Haidar 'Ali and Nizam to leave the field. Even this victory brought no tangible result to the English. In November Haidar 'Ali took Tirupattur and Veniyambadi and laid siege to Amber in Baramahal; on the arrival of reinforcements under Smith, however, he lifted the siege and evacuated Veniyambadi. His attack upon an English convoy at Singurapetta failed. About this time, on receiving information that the English commander Colonel Peach had been advancing upon Hyderabad, the Nizam made secret overtures to the enemy and deserted Haidar 'Ali. Peach's occupation of Warrangal and march towards Hyderabad forced the Nizam to accept British terms in a treaty entered into on March 22, 1768, the ninth article of which runs, "Asaf Jah recognises Haider 'Ali as a rebel and usurper and as such divests him of and

revokes from him all *sanads*, power and distinction conferred by him or any other *subah* of the Deccan."

During Haidar 'Ali's absence in the campaign, the Bombay government incited the *Nairs* to rebel and besiege Mangalore. By a swift movement, Haidar 'Ali, however, relieved Mangalore and suppressed the *Nairs*. The time thus afforded was utilized by Colonel Wood in seizing many places in Baramahal and the country as far south as Dindigul, while Colonel Smith captured Krishnagiri, advanced into the Mysore plateau and occupied Malbagal, Kolar and Hosur. Then the English contemplated an attack on Bangalore and Ser'ngapatam and induced the Maratha chief Murari Rao to join them. The British inaction, however, enabled Haidar 'Ali to return from his distant campaign to Bangalore before Smith had actually begun operations.

Having endeavoured unsuccessfully to surprise Murari Rao by a night attack near Hoskote and to prevent Colonel Wood from joining Colonel Smith near Budikote, Haidar 'Ali retreated to Gurumkunda, where he persuaded 'Ali Raza to rejoin him. He also won over the commandant of Malbagal and occupied the fort. He then entered Coimbatore and seized Karur, Erode and Kaverupuram and took the garrisons of the last two forts in captivity (1768). Thus Haidar 'Ali captured all the territories conquered by Colonel Wood and Karur in addition. After this he entered the Carnatic, and made a swift dash eastward and appeared within five miles of Madras. This so alarmed the Madras government that they sent Dupre to sue for peace. With the enemy at the gate they had to make peace on Haidar 'Ali's terms on April 4, 1769. It provided for the mutual restitution of conquests except Karur which Haidar 'Ali did not agree to restore to Muhammad 'Ali. The terms were generous enough but the British found the condition of a defensive alliance burdensome.

Indeed Haidar 'Ali had gained a brilliant triumph over the English. His was the first Indian power which

had forced the English to sue for peace. As a result of this war, British prestige, influence and credit suffered greatly in India.

It might be asked why did Haidar 'Ali stop short in his victorious march to Madras and offered so generous terms to the English. Could he not have shattered British power in southern India at that time? The answer is that in view of the resources of the English in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, their naval supremacy and also the political complications in southern India, Haidar 'Ali could not have broken British power. He could not have prolonged the war against them because his bitterest enemy, the Marathas, might have stabbed him in the back. The Marathas had twice defeated him and seized his valuable territories. Haidar 'Ali felt that war with the Marathas was inevitable. The Marathas were very powerful and hence he needed a strong ally to support him against them. He could not find such an ally in the Nizam, who was weak and undependable. It was only the British, who could give him valuable support. So he offered them favourable terms in order to utilize their military power against the Marathas.

In January 1770 when Madhav invaded Mysore, Haidar 'Ali sent a *wakil* to Madras demanding aid in terms of the treaty of 1769. The British, however, decided to remain neutral and did not send help. In fact, they did not consider it expedient to antagonise the strong Maratha power. Nawab Muhammad 'Ali, Haidar 'Ali's enemy, advised the Madras government to join Madhav who was also seeking British help. The English, however, feared that if Haidar 'Ali was destroyed, the Marathas would become too powerful.

Again after his defeat at Chinkurali in March 1771 Haidar 'Ali asked for British aid; but the Madras government made no reply. In October of the same year Haidar 'Ali repeated his demand and even proposed to pay 20 lakhs of rupees and to cede Baramahal,

Salem and Atur to the English and informed them that if they did not help him, he would naturally turn to the French. Even then the English neither helped him nor refused him. Also, the Bombay government did not deliver the guns and ammunition they had promised in exchange for pepper and sandalwood in the commercial treaty of 1770. So Haidar 'Ali was convinced that he could not rely on British promises. The French, however, supplied him liberally with military stores. In this way the English were responsible for Haidar 'Ali's pro-French policy.

Even after this, because he felt that the Maratha menace could not be countered in any other way, Haidar 'Ali courted the Madras government and Muhammad 'Ali for a closer rapprochement without success. When the Bombay government seized Salsette, thus making a war with the Marathas inevitable, Haidar 'Ali naturally hoped that the Madras government and Muhammad 'Ali would accept his offer. There was some identity of interest, since both Haidar 'Ali and the British supported the pretensions of Raghunath against the party led by Farnavis. They, however, showed no eagerness to come to an understanding. The Madras government admitted that Haidar 'Ali had long solicited and even importuned them to enter into a close alliance with them, but they could not agree in consideration of inconveniences implicit in an agreement of mutual assistance. The Bombay government, however, proposed on May 9, 1778 to appoint a resident at Haidar 'Ali's court, but on account of Muhammad 'Ali's hostility to Haidar 'Ali that proposal was also dropped. Indeed Muhammad 'Ali was largely responsible for the rupture between Haidar 'Ali and the British. While urging the English to decline Haidar 'Ali's advances, he assured him of his anxious desire to see them driven out of India.

Failing to win over the English and disgusted with their policy, Haidar 'Ali definitely abandoned the

policy of making friends with them. But in view of the political situation in southern India, he could not have taken the risk of remaining isolated. If the English did not join him in a defensive alliance, they might join any offensive alliance against him. For his safety, Haidar 'Ali must eliminate that possibility.

By the capture of Mahe in March 1779 the British highly offended Haidar 'Ali because Mahe though a French settlement, was in his territory and under his protection and through it he received his supply of military stores from the French. Moreover, while taking possession of Guntur from Basalat Jang, the British troops had marched through Haidar 'Ali's territory without asking for his permission. Of course, Haider 'Ali obstructed the passage of this army, but he was greatly irritated at this open disregard of his authority by the English. Furthermore, the British had incited the *Nairs* and others to rise in arms against him. Haidar 'Ali communicated to the Madras government in a straightforward manner all his grievances against them. They, however, neither promised redress nor showed any eagerness to come to an amicable settlement with him.

After these events, Haidar 'Ali felt that war with the English was inevitable and he became definitely anti-British. About this time Farnavis, resenting the action of Bombay government, who by the treaty of Surat in 1775 with Raghunath, obtained Salsette and Bassein and fought to force him upon the Marathas, courted Haidar 'Ali and entered into an alliance with him (September 1779) against the English. Thus began a definitely anti-British phase in Haidar 'Ali's career and he resolved to crush the English.

The year 1779 occupies a significant place in the history of India, because in this year, for the first time the Indian powers, Mysore, the Marathas and the Nizam forgetting their differences and hostilities, formed a confederacy in order to expel the English from the sub continent.

The initiative in building up this confederacy was taken by Haidar 'Ali, who first made overtures to the Poona government. They, expecting the British to accept their terms, did not give definite reply for some time. However they hastened to accept Haidar 'Ali's offer as soon as they found that the British would not yield. At that time Farnavis became so eager to gain Haidar 'Ali's cooperation that he confirmed all the concessions made by Raghunath, thus recognising Haidar 'Ali as the ruler of all the territories up to the Krishna.

The alliance between Haidar 'Ali and the Poona government was formed in Aswin (September-October 1779). Nizam 'Ali, who had grievances against Madras government over Guntur and also for their non-payment of tribute for the Northern Sarkars, was easily induced by the astute Brahmin minister Farnavis to join the anti-British alliance.

The general scheme of the allies was that the Marathas were to invade Berar and Central India, the Nizam the Northern Sarkars and Haidar 'Ali the Carnatic and southern India. The coalition was formidable and aided by the French threatened the very existence of the British power in India.

In July 1780 with an army of 90,000 men Haidar 'Ali swept down upon the plains of the Carnatic like an avalanche carrying everything before him. It was not till he appeared in the vicinity of St. Thomas' Mount, nine miles from Madras, that the Madras government scented the danger and began making preparations for defence. Haidar 'Ali then sent his second son Karim to Porto Novo and himself with his eldest son Tipu advanced towards Arcot.

The Madras government sent Sir Hector Munro to Conjeeveram and ordered Colonel Baillie to join him with his troops from Guntur. Hearing of these movements, Haidar 'Ali sent Tipu with 10,000 men and 18 guns to intercept Baillie's detachment and he himself proceeded to Conjeeveram. Following the enemy Tipu engaged Baillie near Palur six miles from Conjeeveram.

While his guns were pouring death upon the English from the rear, Haidar 'Ali's cavalry appeared on their flanks and throwing them into confusion, compelled Baillie to ask for quarter (September 10, 1807). This disaster was the most fatal that had ever overtaken British arms in India and was commemorated at Serin-gapatam by an elaborate painting on the walls of the *Dariya Bagh* palace, where it is still to be seen.¹ A French officer of Haidar 'Ali wrote, "There is not in India an example of a similar defeat."

Baillie's disaster obliged Munro to retreat towards Madras in haste. Had Haidar 'Ali followed him, he could have destroyed his force and again dictated terms to the English at the gates of Madras. Instead, he turned to Arcot and captured it on October 30, 1807. After this Tippu occupied Satghur, Amber, Tiagur and other forts, while Haidar 'Ali captured Gingee, Karnatgarh, Karanguli, Chidambaram and other places of the Carnatic and laid siege to Permacoil, Vellore and Wandiwash.

The situation was indeed critical for the English. In the words of Sir Alfred Lyall, "the fortunes of the English had fallen to their lowest water-mark." Luckily for the Company, the direction of the war was now assumed by governor-general Warren Hastings. He immediately sent to the south Sir Eyre Coote, the victor of Wandiwash and commander-in-chief in India to 'vindicate the rights and honour of British Arms'. By promising the restitution of Guntur and the payment of *peshkash*, he detached Nizam 'Ali, a lukewarm member from the beginning, from the confederacy. Hastings also bribed the Raja of Berar, Madhoji Bhosle, to desert the alliance and even induced him to help Coote's forces proceeding from Bengal to Madras. His defection was a blow to the allies, particularly to Haidar 'Ali.

¹ Bowring, p. 92.

Not daunted by these desertions, Haidar 'Ali continued the war with his usual firmness and vigour, and repulsed Coote's advance to Pagoda, forcing him to retreat to Porto Novo. His attack on Coote at Porto Novo on July 1, 1781, however, failed. Though neither a great nor a decisive victory, this Battle of Porto Novo recovered much of the military prestige of the English which had fallen so low at Palur. This victory obliged Haidar 'Ali to evacuate Tanjore-Trichnopoly region and Tipu to raise the siege of Wandiwash.

In August and September Coote won some advantage over Haidar 'Ali at Palur and Sholinghur. Still the English position did not improve much. "Although these successes restored the English confidence in themselves and their leaders, such a war of attrition would exhaust them sooner than the enemy; and neither in this year nor in 1782 did Coote make the least progress towards depriving Haidar 'Ali of the Nawab's possessions while the English resources and finances steadily declined." Whatever advantages the English might have obtained by Coote's successes were, however, destroyed by Tipu, who forced Colonel Braithwaite to surrender at Annagudi in Tanjore on February 18, 1782. This disconcerted Coote's plans and enabled Tipu to occupy a large part of Tanjore with the help of the French troops under Duchemin. Coote, however, obtained a tactical victory over Haidar Ali near Arni but he failed to capture the fort of Arni from Tipu in June 1782.

With the Carnatic and Tanjore under his occupation and the repeated failures of Coote to win any definite advantages, Haidar 'Ali had better prospects in the war. But to his great disadvantage, the Marathas proved a false ally and made peace with the English. Being unable to resist the advance of General Goddard into Gwalior, Mahadaji Sindhia concluded a treaty with the English on October 13, 1781 and also induced the

Poona government to come to terms in the Treaty of Salbye on May 17, 1782, whereby the English gave up Raghunath's cause and restored all Maratha possessions except Salsette. The Marathas also undertook that Haidar 'Ali would restore all the conquests he had made from the English and Muhaimmad 'Ali. The execution of this part of the treaty, making Haidar 'Ali appear as almost a dependent of Marathas, was impracticable, but it had the effect of breaking the coalition between the Marathas and Haidar 'Ali who thus stood alone against the English. Haidar 'Ali also could not get the full support of the vacillating French; moreover, the English incited rebellions in Malabar.

Notwithstanding these heavy odds, Haidar 'Ali did not abandon himself to despair. He sent Tipu to Malabar, where the English had occupied Tellicherry, Mahé, Calicut, Ramgirikota, but were repulsed at Palaghat. Tipu compelled Humberstone to retreat to Ponnani. He then laid siege to Ponnani. The news of his father's death, however, made him raise the siege.

In the later phase of the war with Coote, Haidar 'Ali was more successful than his enemy. Coote could not keep the field long because of inadequate provisions. In concert with the French fleet, Haidar 'Ali foiled Coote's attempt on Cuddalore in the south and reduced him to complete immobility. To the great relief of the English, however, Haidar 'Ali died of cancer at Narayansingarayanpet near Chittur on December 7, 1782 at the age of 60 leaving his son Tipu to finish the war.

In assessing the results of Haidar 'Ali's campaigns, Bowring writes, "He had not indeed achieved his main object of driving the English out of southern India. But he had overrun large tract of their country, occupied most of their principal forts, and fought steadily and with success against his antagonists."¹ Indeed, till his death Haidar 'Ali had the initiative in

¹ Bowring, p. 101.

the war and the wounds he inflicted on the English were deeper than those he had received himself. Had the French cooperated fully with him and had the French navy under Suffren won command of the sea, he would have succeeded in inflicting fatal blows on the English and finishing the war before his death. The French had, however, their own ambition of restoring their lost position and establishing an empire in India, hence they did not like to serve as mercenaries for Haidar 'Ali. They would even bargain for money and spoil valuable chances of ruining the enemy.

The defection of the native allies of Haidar 'Ali caused the greatest injury to him and to the common cause. Haidar 'Ali's original plan was based on his alliance with the Nizam and the Marathas. He had expected that they would remain true to the cause and fight vigorously to destroy the English. Haidar 'Ali regretted that he had trusted the Marathas, saying, "Between me and the English there were grounds for mutual dissatisfaction, but no sufficient cause for war, and I might have made them my friends in spite of Muhammad 'Ali, the most treacherous of men. I ought to have reflected that no man of common sense will trust a Maratha, and they themselves do not expect to be trusted."¹

In the words of Campbell, "Haidar 'Ali was an extraordinary man, and perhaps possessed as great natural talents as any recorded in the page of historyand to the last day of his life, perfectly illiterate, he not only emerged from his native obscurity by the vigour of his mind and body but became the object of terror and admiration to surrounding potentates."²

In the words of Bowring, "Haidar was bold, an original and enterprising commander, skilful in tactics

¹ *Ibid.*

² Campbell, p. 88.

and fertile in resources, full of energy and never desponding in defeat." He was a terror to his foes but he was loved by his soldiers, who were firmly attached to him and fought gallantly for his cause.

His intelligence, shrewdness and capacity for business were remarkable. He could give attention to several matters at the same time; he could hear a letter read, dictate orders and witness a theatrical exhibition all at once without being distracted by any one of these occupations. He worked from early morning until midnight and even the minutest detail of the affairs of the state did not escape his attention.

Haidar 'Ali was also a good administrator. He introduced extraordinary vigour and energy into the government of Mysore, which made that small state a first class power in the eighteenth century in India. He maintained the fiction of the rule of Wadiyars, the kings of Mysore. He kept the Raja as a puppet allowing him to appear in public only on festive occasions.¹

Haidar 'Ali maintained the administrative system of the Wadiyars. The central government had 18 departments each of which was under a minister or a secretary. In civil administration, finance and police were the most important departments. Haidar 'Ali's police, particularly its intelligence branch, was very efficiently organised and it helped him in establishing a highly centralised autocracy in Mysore. In provincial administration, he slightly modified the system by destroying many of the *poligars*. His conservative instinct is, however, reflected in his respect for established customs in revenue administration. Haidar 'Ali granted security of tenure to the tenant so long as he paid land revenue, which varying from 1/3 to 1/2 of the produce, could be paid either in cash or in kind.

1. Wadiyars—Chikka Krishna (1734-66), Nanja Raja (1766-70), Chama Raja I (1770-75) and Chama Raja II.

Haidar 'Ali's army organisation was highly efficient. Besides irregulars and large forces stationed in various forts of his dominion, he maintained under his personal command a big regular army, which numbered 88,000 at the time of his death. His army was well-equipped and trained in European methods. He had employed European, particularly French, instructors. The *chela* battalions and *candachar peons* were two distinctive features of Haidar 'Ali's military system. The *chelas* were recruited from young prisoners of war or orphans. The *candachar peons* were originally cultivators, who flocked under his banner during the idle months. Armed with matchlock and pikes, these irregulars were engaged in clearing roads, making batteries, garrisoning captured towns and doing other work connected with field operations.

To have effective control over the coastal regions and to counteract the activities of the European maritime powers particularly the British, Haidar 'Ali felt the need of a navy and, in 1765, with the help of European technicians, he built a small navy of 30 warships and a few transport ships which was greatly increased in the following year. It had one Muslim and one European commandar, Latif 'Ali Beg and Stannett. The Malabar *Moplas*, who were good navigators, formed an excellent crew to man Haidar 'Ali's navy. Stannett's desertion to the English in 1768 was a set back to his navy; Haidar 'Ali, however, began constructing a larger fleet in 1778 with the help of the Dutch technician Jose Azalares. But in 1780 it received another blow as Admiral Edward Hughes destroyed a large number of its vessels at anchor in Mangalore harbour.

As a ruler, Haidar 'Ali was tolerant; his rule is the best example of a successful Muslim administrator in a Hindu kingdom. He chose his officers on merit; most of his ministers were Brahmins ; Krishna Rao, Purnia

and Shamia held important portfolios in the ministry. The revenue department was manned by the Hindus. Some of the provincial governors were also Hindu. The Hindus performed their religious rites without any interference. Similarly a Christian missionary, Schwartz, conducted services for a band of Christians without having to seek permission.

Haidar 'Ali made *in'am* grants to the Brahmins and temples and helped in the reconstruction of the dilapidated temples. Munro thus describes his administrative achievement, "The Mysore Government is the most simple and despotic monarchy in the world, in which every department, civil and military, possesses the regularity and system communicated to it by the genius of Haidar and in which all pretensions derived from high birth being discouraged or extirpated, justice severely and impartially administered, a numerous and well-disciplined army kept up, and almost every department of trust or consequence conferred on man raised from obscurity, gives the government a vigour hitherto unexampled in India."¹

¹ Sinha, p. 258.

CHAPTER XIV

TIPU SULTAN (I)

Struggle against the British

Tipu Sultan was the only Indian ruler during the eighteenth century who saw clearly the danger to the independence of India from the British and did all that lay in his power to avert it. His life was a continuous struggle against the establishment of British rule ; this was the central purpose of his life. That he was unsuccessful does not diminish his greatness. He failed because the forces ranged against him proved too powerful for him. Nevertheless he fearlessly discharged his duty.

Tipu Sultan has been particularly unlucky in his historians. Seldom has history been so distorted to malign a ruler. The English writers considered him as the most obstinate enemy of their interests, and therefore they felt justified in falsifying history. There was no fault which they did not ascribe to him. Contemporary Muslim chroniclers in trying to depict him as a fighter in the cause of Islam have created the impression that he was intolerant. Actually, while he did fight to preserve the political power of Islam, there was no trace of religious bigotry in his outlook or conduct. In his opposition to the British, however, he was uncompromising.

Tipu Sultan was born to Haidar 'Ali's second wife Fatima, on Saturday, 20 *Zil-hijja*, 1163 A. H. (November 21, 1750) at D^a-vanhalli, a small town near

Bangalore.¹ He was named Tipu after the name of a saint of Arcot, Tipu Mastan, whose tomb Haidar 'Ali had visited along with his wife a few months before the birth of Tipu and where they had both sought his intercession to be blessed with a son. 'Sultan' was a part of Tipu's name and not a title assumed later in life. Tipu Sultan was also given the name of Fath 'Ali and the *kunniyat* of Abul Fath after his grandfather Fath Muhammad.

Haidar 'Ali himself had received no education in his youth. He was, quite understandably, keen on giving the best education to his son. He employed competent teachers for Tipu Sultan, who did benefit from their tutoring. His accomplishments included a knowledge of Persian which was still the court language throughout the sub continent. But the assertions of certain contemporary authorities about his scholastic and literary attainments are obvious exaggerations. His knowledge of Persian was limited and though he could express himself in the language, he had by no means mastered it.² This is not surprising. Since he started his military career at the early age of fifteen, his academic education could not have been very thorough. Even so, apart from Kannadi he could speak Persian and Urdu fluently. He had also received instruction in Arabic and Islam. It was, however, in the art of war that he received most competent coaching. Excellent tutors were appointed by Haidar 'Ali for this purpose. Ghazi Khan was entrusted with the task

¹ Kirmani, *Nishan-i-Haidari* (Bombay edition, p. 19), and *Karnamah-i-Haidari*, (p. 864 both mention Saturday and the above mentioned date according to the Hijra Calendar. The latter work while converting the date mentions 1849 A. C. which is obviously wrong. Secondary works such as Mohibbul Hasan Khan's *History of Tipu Sultan* (p. 9) and Mahmud Khan Banglauri's *Tarikh-i-Saltanat-i-Khudadad*, (p. 194) have also wrongly converted the date, one giving November 10, 1750 and the other 1752. Moreover Mohibbul Hasan Khan has mentioned Friday instead of Saturday which is not corroborated by the authorities cited above on whom he also seems to rely.

² The writer has come across numerous mistakes both of grammar and spelling in Tipu Sultan's diary which contains an account of his dreams in his own hand-writing, see Introduction to the *Dreams of Tipu Sultan* edited by Mahmud Husain, 1957.

of training Tipu Sultan in riding, shooting, fencing and the tactics of war. The prince also used to attend military reviews and parades with his father. All this had its uses for a man who was destined to spend the whole of his life in fighting against the enemies of his country and die a martyr's death.

Already, while in his teens, Tipu Sultan showed great courage and bravery in the wars which his father waged. It was because of this that Haidar 'Ali, proud of his son's deeds, conferred on him the command of 200 horse, soon increased to 500, along with several districts as *jagir*.

A brief review of Tipu Sultan's career as a soldier during the lifetime of his father will not be inappropriate at this place.

In 1767 on June 19, Tipu Sultan was given his first command though he was placed under the supervision of his tutor, Ghazi Khan. He was ordered to proceed towards Madras. While Tipu Sultan was carrying out his mission he was recalled by Haidar 'Ali, who had suffered a defeat at the hands of Col. Joseph Smith in South Arcot. The efforts of Major Fitzgerald and Col. Tod to intercept him failed. Tipu Sultan dodged them by his swift movement and succeeded in joining his father.

Tipu Sultan accompanied his father when the latter attacked the forts of Tirappatur and Vaniyambadi and conquered them. He again displayed his skill in accomplishing a safe retreat in the wake of Colonel Smith's advance on Ambar.

Lutf 'Ali Beg, who had been fighting with the English on the Malabar coast, ran short of men and arms. He appealed to Haidar 'Ali for reinforcements, who ordered Tipu Sultan along with Ghazi Khan to proceed immediately to the help of Lutf 'Ali Beg. Tipu Sultan successfully captured Mangalore from the English who had occupied this city under the command of Major Garvin and Captain Watson. By this time Haidar 'Ali

had himself arrived with a large army at the scene of action. The English evacuated the fort and retreated towards Madras in confusion. Tipu Sultan took advantage of this and expelled the English from the coast of Malabar. In no small measure was it due to Tipu Sultan's exploits that, two years later in March, 1769, Haidar 'Ali dictated terms to the British in front of the very gates of Madras.

When the Marathas invaded Mysore in November 1769, Haidar 'Ali decided to avoid pitched battles, and he despatched his son to harass the enemy compelling him to withdraw from his principality. Tipu Sultan remained outside of Bednur and began to intercept the Maratha convoys from Poona. Again he was called to face the Maratha advance. Due to slackness in effecting a safe retreat to Seringapatam Haidar 'Ali suffered great losses. Haidar 'Ali felt frustrated and his wrath fell upon his son, but Tipu Sultan is not to share blame for this retreat.

The Marathas failed to follow up this victory. They were so busy in dividing up the plunder that Haidar 'Ali and Tipu Sultan gained time in strengthening the defences of Seringapatam. Consequently when the Marathas appeared before the fort Tipu Sultan audaciously led sorties and created disruption in the Maratha ranks. After thirty-three days, Trimbak Rao, the Maratha leader, withdrew from Seringapatam and marched back to Tanjore. Tipu Sultan followed him and harassed his forces all along the way and also frustrated his designs of plundering other cities. But Tipu Sultan's forces were insufficient to hold against such a resourceful enemy and Haidar 'Ali was obliged to conclude peace with the Marathas in July 1772.

Soon Haidar 'Ali got an opportunity of reoccupying the best territory when Peshwa Madhav Rao died and dissensions arose among the Maratha Confederates. Tipu Sultan assisted his father in wresting the territories of Sira, Maddagiri, Gurramkonda and Chennarayadurga

from the Marathas. Tipu Sultan also conquered Belary, a dependency of Basalat Jang in 1775. He occupied Hubli but failed to capture the fort of Dharwar. Thus between the years 1774 and 1778 Haidar 'Ali had succeeded in reconquering not only the territories up to the Tungabhadra river which the Marathas had wrested from him in the previous wars, but also in wresting that part of their kingdom which lay between the Tungabhadra and the Krishna. Tipu Sultan played a notable role in all these campaigns.

In July 1780 Haidar 'Ali, with about 80,000 men descended upon the plains of the Carnatic "like an avalanche" till the inhabitants of Madras could see from their walls the heralds of the invading army. This was the beginning of the Second Anglo-Mysore War. The position was serious enough for the English. However, Colonel Baillie was sent with an English brigade to reinforce Sir Hector Munro near Conjeevaram. Hearing of this Haidar 'Ali immediately despatched Tipu Sultan to cut off Baillie's detachment on its way to join the main army. Tipu Sultan skilfully surrounded Baillie and cut up his army who offered a gallant resistance. Baillie together with 50 officers and 150 English soldiers was taken prisoner. Sir Thomas Munro described the disaster which befell Baillie's army as "the severest blow that the English ever sustained in India."¹

If only Haidar 'Ali had followed up this victory by attacking Munro, the history of South India might have been quite different. In the words of Sir Eyre Coote, "had Haider Ali followed up his success at that time to the gates of Madras, he would have been in possession of that most important fortress." But Haidar 'Ali missed this golden opportunity and instead of attacking demoralized Munro, he proceeded to capture Arcot, the siege of which he had left incomplete because of Munro's approach. Haidar 'Ali sent a small force

¹ Tipu Sultan's tactics in this battle are cited as a model to be followed in similar circumstances. See *Fath-al-Mujahidin* edited by Mahmud Husain, Persian Text, p. 72,

under Tipu Sultan to harass the English troops who had been retreating towards Chingleput and then on to Madras. Tipu Sultan had some success in this pursuit.

Haidar 'Ali then called his son to Arcot. The town was captured after repeated attacks. Tipu Sultan followed up this victory by taking several other towns. It was no doubt an achievement for the young prince to wrest so many important forts from the English. For these deeds Tipu Sultan was showered with gifts by his father.

Another remarkable feat of bravery was shown by Tipu Sultan when he defeated Colonel Braithwaite at Tanjore on February 18, 1782. Heavy losses were inflicted upon the English army and Braithwaite had to sue for protection. The survivors were taken prisoner. Haidar 'Ali was highly pleased and Tipu Sultan himself took legitimate pride in defeating Baillie and later on Braithwaite in the course of the Second Mysore War.¹ Braithwaite's defeat seriously hampered British designs.

From this time onwards we notice a swing in favour of Haidar 'Ali. At this stage de Suffren, the great French admiral, arrived with two thousand French troops. Haidar 'Ali then captured Cuddalore from the British. Later the concerted attack by Tipu Sultan and Haidar 'Ali forced Coote to march back to Madras from Arni. In the meantime noticing the danger to the Malabar coast from the English forces Haidar 'Ali despatched Tipu Sultan along with Lally, a French general, and his corps. Tipu Sultan was successful in retrieving the position on the Malabar coast. Humberstone, the English colonel sent by the Bombay government to launch an attack on the Malabar coast had already left the country on hearing of the approach of Tipu Sultan with a large force. Tipu Sultan gave chase to the English army as far as Ponnani river. The English retreat, however, was so rapid that Tipu Sultan

¹ *Fath-al-Mujahidin*, p. 72.

could not catch up with it. Tipu Sultan laid siege to the fort of Ponnani. He was planning to sack the fort when he received the news of his father's death and thus was forced to leave the task unfinished and return to Narasingrayanpet near Chittoor.

The news of Haidar Ali's death was kept a secret till Tipu Sultan's arrival in order to prevent any possibility of disturbances.¹ Maha Mirza Khan, a high official of Haidar 'Ali's court, brought the sad news to Tipu Sultan.² On December 12, 1782, Tipu Sultan set out with great speed towards Chittoor. He appointed Arshad Beg Khan to take charge of the government of Malabar in his absence. Tipu Sultan reached the main camp on December 26, 1782.³ He refused to be received with any display of pomp and show and entered the camp after sunset in simple style, where he was received by his principal officers and younger brother, Karim Sahib. Thus at the age of thirty-two Tipu Sultan succeeded to a large principality, which was bounded in the north by the river Krishna, in the south by the state of Travancore and the district of Tinnevely, in the east by the Eastern Ghats and in the west by the Arabian Sea. With the exception of two minor episodes in which a group of malcontents tried to exploit the situation at the death of Haidar 'Ali, all the sections of the army remained loyal to Tipu Sultan. He had acquired considerable experience of war and administration during the life time of his father. He had taken a prominent part in his various campaigns and had distinguished himself on the battle-field. He had particularly displayed his preference for swift movement. He also seemed to attach the greatest importance to the element of surprise in warfare.⁴

What was the political situation of south India with which Tipu Sultan was confronted at the time of his

¹ *Nishan-i-Haidari*, p. 249.

² *Ibid.*, p. 250.

³ Kirmani gives 20 Muharram 1196 (A. H.), *Nishan-i-Haidari*, p. 239.

⁴ For Tipu Sultan's ideas on strategy and the organization of his army see *Fath-al-Mujahidin* edited by Mahmud Husain.

accession ? The East India Company under Warren Hastings had been engaged for some time in vigorously interfering in the affairs of south India, which led to the Second Anglo-Mysore War. Warren Hastings' entire diplomacy was directed towards isolating Mysore. He had succeeded in winning over, early in 1781, the raja of Berar and concluding a treaty with Sindhia in October of the same year by which the Maratha chief undertook to negotiate a peace between the other belligerents and the British. The result was the Treaty of Salbai in May 1782, which for all practical purposes brought the Anglo-Maratha War to a close. He also succeeded in detaching the Nizam, thus isolating Haidar 'Ali by withdrawing from him the aid of his allies.

The only remaining ally for Mysore at the time of Tipu Sultan's accession were the French. Till then the French had, on the whole, maintained their position on the sea, though they had been greatly hampered for want of a base within striking distance. Therefore French help could be only spasmodic. Tipu Sultan had to deal with the enemy practically single-handed. This, however, did not deter him from continuing the war, although the British had hoped to the contrary. On February 5, 1783, Stuart moved with a large army towards Wandiwash. Tipu Sultan on hearing of the movement immediately set out with the French troops under Cossigny and encamped in the vicinity of Wandiwash. After a few engagements Stuart decided to withdraw having been impressed with the order and discipline of Tipu Sultan's army and the imposing array of the French battalions.¹ As Tipu Sultan's presence was necessary on the Malabar coast where the English forces had marched under General Matthews, he did not pursue Stuart. The next English move was to divert Tipu Sultan's attention from the Carnatic. Both the governments of Madras and Bombay found that it was futile to carry on the war on only one front. They were keen on dividing the forces

¹ *Nishan-i-Haidari*, pp. 260-61.

of their opponent on two fronts. The Bombay government was urged to attack the Malabar possessions of Tipu Sultan and the Madras government was to attack Mysore from the south. In this way the English thought to break the power of Tipu Sultan.

It was the Bombay government which took the initiative ; on hearing the news of Humberstone's failure at Ponnani, they sent Brigadier Matthews to his relief. By this time Tipu Sultan had returned to Chittoor on hearing of the demise of his father. Matthews instead of relieving Humberstone proceeded towards Bednur on the instruction of the Bombay government. The move was wise as the Bednur district was fertile and could furnish abundant supplies to the English. Moreover, the place was near the coast where the English armies could be reinforced without hindrance. It was also a convenient point for any possible retreat.

At Kundapur Tipu Sultan's forces offered considerable resistance to Matthews, who, however, succeeded in taking the place. From this point onwards the English did not face any resistance although the defences were strong and well supplied with artillery. There is strong evidence to prove that Ayaz, the governor of the province behaved treacherously in surrendering the important fort and the town of Bednur on the assurance that he would be allowed to retain his governorship under the English. Matthews agreed to this and Ayaz surrendered Bednur on January 28, 1783. Large treasures not only at Bednur but in other cities also fell into the hands of the English. Incidentally, these treasures were appropriated by the English officers themselves and not handed over to the Company.¹

Tipu Sultan, on hearing of the invasion, sent Lutf 'Ali Beg for the defence of Bednur. But it was too late. Lutf 'Ali Beg on reaching near Bednur came to know

¹ *Secret Proceedings*, National Archives of India, May 12, 1783. Campbell to Hastings ; *Ibid*, May 26, 1783, cited by M. H. Khan in his *History of Tipu Sultan*, p. 32.

of its surrender. He tried hard to capture Anantapur but could not do so because of insufficient troops. He had been waiting for reinforcements when he received orders from Tipu Sultan to proceed to the relief of Mangalore which was invested by the English. But before he could reach he heard of the sack of that port too on March 9, 1783. The English army had committed unbridled cruelty on the young and the old, women and children alike. According to Mill, "Orders were given to shed the blood of every man who was taken under arms ; and some of the officers were reprimanded for not seeing those orders rigidly executed."¹

Tipu Sultan was much distressed by the news of these heinous atrocities. He set out in April with 12,000 men and appeared on the frontiers of Bednur. He easily captured Haidargarh and Kavelurga ; then he sent detachments to occupy the passes in the Ghat in order to cut off the communications of the English army with the coast. Tipu Sultan sent another force to relieve Anantapur and he himself set out with the rest of the army to invest Bednur. Matthews fought before the town but was defeated and obliged to retreat into the fort, where he was besieged by Tipu Sultan's forces who installed thirteen batteries round it and continued heavy fire causing great damage to the buildings inside the fort. By this time another force sent to block the passes in the Ghats had successfully isolated Bednur from Mangalore. Owing to these measures the besieged garrison was reduced to a sad plight. The shortage of provisions and ammunition soon told upon their nerves. A ' putrid fever ' took a heavy toll of life. All the buildings in the fort collapsed and the army, exposed to the hardship of the weather, was reduced to a pitiable condition.

Matthews offered his terms for surrendering the fort to Tipu Sultan who was prepared to accept the terms with the alteration of only one item, by which the

¹ Mill, *History of British India*, III, 183.

English army before sailing out towards Bombay wanted to pile their arms on the glacis. The modification sought was that the army should first march out and pile their arms not on the glacis but in front of the Sultan's army. The English considered this condition insulting and rejected it. The English with a desperate attempt tried to storm the Sultan's grand battery, but they failed. Again they retreated into the fort. Ultimately Matthews accepted the terms as modified by Tipu Sultan.

Contrary to the conditions the English army before starting from the fort misappropriated the governmental treasury. On receipt of this information Tipu Sultan ordered for a search of the English army and found the knapsacks of every soldier lined with gold. The Sultan's officers recovered about 40,000 pagodas.

This was not the only violation of the surrender terms committed by the English ; they also pillaged the public stores, burnt the government records and failed to deliver all the Mysorian prisoners of war. Tipu Sultan, therefore, put them in irons and marched ~~them~~ off to Chitaldrug.

The allegation that Tipu Sultan was only seeking some pretext to implicate the English general is quite unfounded. There is no evidence to substantiate this view. It is true that Tipu Sultan welcomed this opportunity of punishing Matthews whose cruelties towards the garrisons of Onore and Anantapur, and whose transactions with the faithless Ayaz were still fresh in his mind, but there is nothing to show that he had any preconceived plan, or that if Matthews had adhered to the terms of the capitulation, Tipu Sultan would have still imprisoned him for his past misdeeds.

Free from this venture, Tipu Sultan marched towards Mangalore. He had already despatched a force under Husain 'Ali Khan, but this commander was surprised by Campbell twelve miles from Mangalore and was obliged

to stage a retreat after a loss of 200 men. Tipu Sultan arrived before Mangalore on May 20, 1783. He defeated the English forces in the very first engagement and also cut off their retreat. The English suffered heavy casualties. With great difficulty they shut themselves up in the fort. Tipu Sultan, thereupon, laid siege to the fort.

The batteries erected by Tipu Sultan took a heavy toll of life and buildings. After a few days he effected a breach in the wall of the fort, but because of certain obstacles his army could not get into it. The weather also caused great hardships to the besieging army. Even in the face of these difficulties the Sultan's army was pushing forward. But just at this time news reached Mangalore of the cessation of hostilities between the French and the English, and orders were received by Cossigny to withdraw from the conflict (June 23, 1783). This upset Tipu Sultan's plans, while it raised the drooping spirits of the English. But in spite of the odds he continued the siege. After a few days the English started negotiations for the cessation of hostilities and an armistice was signed between the English and Tipu Sultan on August 2, 1783, according to which the position existing on the day of the armistice was to be maintained till the conclusion of peace.

The Madras government tried to divert Tipu Sultan's forces by inciting an adventurer, Sayyid Muhammad, to attack, but he was defeated by one of the generals of Tipu Sultan, Qamar-ud-din Khan. Another attempt of the English by sending Montgomery to support Sayyid Muhammad was also completely defeated by Qamar-ud-din Khan.

Failing in their efforts to create a breach in the north-east, the English tried to penetrate into Tipu Sultan's dominions from the south, but they could not succeed in this attempt either. In fact the English army which was sent under Fullarton was so weak that he himself admitted his inability to oppose the forces of Tipu Sultan.

The object of the English was to draw off the pressure on themselves in the Bednur province. But they could not achieve their goal as Tipu Sultan's forces in the Coimbatore area were strong enough to resist the English invasion.

Fullarton, realising his weakness, started intrigues with the rajas of Travancore and Calicut and other Malabar chieftains. After succeeding in this he went to Dharapuran to remain on the frontier, in accordance with the Madras government's instructions, ready to take the offensive at any opportunity arising from the slightest breach of the armistice.

When he found himself sufficiently strong, Fullarton marched towards Palghat in complete disregard for the terms of the armistice. Palghat was a fertile territory and Fullarton specially chose it for replenishing his supplies as the English army had been suffering from privations.

Raushan Khan, the commander of the area protested against this clear violation of the armistice, but Fullarton completely ignored his protest and continued to advance. He occupied a number of small forts and then advanced towards Palghat. Even though Raushan Khan was able to secure letters from the governor of Madras addressed to Fullarton ordering him to desist from all offensive operations, Fullarton did not pay any heed to these letters. Such an attitude was due to the double game the governor of Madras had been playing against Mysore. Macartney sent two sets of contradictory orders. According to the ones sent through Tipu Sultan's officers, Fullarton was required to abstain from hostilities ; by those which were sent to him directly, aggression was not only connived at but encouraged.¹ Macartney's intention was to increase the Company's bargaining power in the negotiations for peace with Tipu Sultan. But in the end, realising that Fullarton's conduct was a great hindrance to the peace talks, he ordered the English troops to return within the limits

¹ Military Sundry Book, Vol. 66, p. 383; Macartney to Fullarton, December 1783.

occupied by them on July 26, 1783. Even in doing so they plundered the towns as they vacated them, and they carried away 100,000 pagodas, large supplies of grain, military stores, guns, etc.

On the Mangalore front as well where Tipu Sultan himself was present, the English were trying to find some excuse to violate the terms of the armistice. The fact that Macleod arrived, with a detachment, before Mangalore was an open violation of the terms. In spite of this Tipu Sultan showed consideration towards him and granted several of his requests. Taking advantage of the leniency, the English demands increased in number which Tipu Sultan flatly refused. The Bombay government was anxious to retain the possession of Mangalore ; so they ordered Macleod to relieve the garrison in the fort forcibly. Accordingly, on November 22, Macleod arrived before Mangalore with a large army, and insisted on sending 4,000 bales of rice into the fort. But Tipu Sultan would not allow it. A resumption of hostilities between Tipu Sultan and the English seemed imminent. It was, however, averted by the efforts of Piveron de Morlat, a French agent with Tipu Sultan, who was anxious to preserve peace. A compromise was arrived at. Tipu Sultan granted favourable terms to the English. But in spite of the agreement Macleod did not give up his intrigues and aggressive designs. He asked Campbell to be ready for war within a few months.

Campbell was disheartened by the hardships which he had endured for more than eight months. His army was reduced to a sad plight ; scurvy was violently raging, hospitals were filled with nearly two-thirds of the garrison ; others had scarcely any strength left to hold their arms.¹

The result was that Campbell decided to capitulate, and on January 29, 1784, he delivered the fort to Tipu Sultan, " under articles", says Campbell, " the

¹ Military Consultations, Madras Records. Feb. 20, 1784, Vol. 97A, p. 533.

most beneficial I could ask for the garrison, and which the Nawab has most honourably and strictly adhered to.'"

Meanwhile, however, the English had been able to capture a still more important fortress namely, Cannanore, a small Moplah settlement, on the Malabar coast. Macleod treated the Bibi and her family with disrespect, contrary to the treaty the English had with Tipu Sultan. Macleod's high-handed behaviour was approved by the Madras government. But the Bombay government disavowed and annulled the treaty on the ground that Macleod had no right to enter into any engagement without reference to the Company. On their orders, after the conclusion of the Treaty of Mangalore, Cannanore was handed back to the Bibi.

The English having failed to achieve their object through aggression resolved to make peace with Tipu Sultan. Tipu Sultan had been holding his position at Mangalore, in spite of the withdrawal of the French after the stopping of hostilities between France and England. On the other hand the Company's position in the south was weakening owing to the dissensions between the civil and military authorities at Madras. Moreover the Company was not in a position to bear the strain and stress of war any longer. There were other factors too which obliged Macartney, the governor of Madras, to agree to the conclusion of a separate peace with Tipu Sultan. There was the pressure from the Court of Directors who enjoined on him the necessity of an early peace. Secondly, owing to the poor state of Bengal finances and the prospect of a famine in northern India which had compelled the Bengal government to prohibit the export of grain from the province, the governor-general and Council no longer entertained the idea of the renewal of hostilities. Lastly, the advice which the governor-general received from Anderson,

¹ Mohibbul Hasan Khan, quoting Secret Report in his *History of Tipu Sultan*, p. 451.

the Company's agent with Sindhia, convinced him that it was futile to object to peace with Tipu Sultan.

Taking into consideration these factors, the governor-general granted permission to the Madras government to enter into a separate treaty with Tipu Sultan. On October 31, 1783, Anthony Sadlier and George Leonard Staunton were appointed as English commissioners to negotiate a peace treaty. After protracted negotiations between the English commissioners and Tipu Sultan's agents they arrived at a common basis for a final treaty. The commissioners presented a memorandum to Tipu Sultan in which they demanded the evacuation of the Carnatic and the release of the English prisoners of war. The English were prepared to return those of Tipu Sultan's possessions which were in their hands. Moreover, the commissioners would give orders for the evacuation of Onore, Karwar and other places as soon as 100 English prisoners had been delivered ; other territories were to be given up as soon as the rest of the prisoners had been released. If Tipu Sultan refused to accept these terms within a month, it would mean renewal of war, and the English would be joined by the Marathas and together they would compel him to submit to the Treaty of Salbai concluded earlier between the Peshwa and the Company.

Tipu Sultan accepted all these terms excepting the one about the Marathas in connection with which he pointed out that he was not a party to the treaty concluded between the British and the Marathas and as such had nothing to do with it. To the threat of the English that they would join hands with the Marathas, Tipu Sultan's retort was that he had the French to assist him. Tipu Sultan consented to all the reasonable demands of the English and as against those which were unreasonable he proposed alternatives, but these were rejected by the English. In their turn the English proposed a draft treaty containing twenty-nine articles. Tipu Sultan did not approve of the clauses of the draft

treaty, and he informed the Commissioners on February 22, that, as the talks had failed, he would leave for Seringapatam the next morning.

The English commissioners were greatly perturbed at the decision of Tipu Sultan as it meant a renewal of hostilities. They, therefore, yielded to some of the demands and after protracted deliberations they arrived at an agreement. On March 7, the terms were agreed to and the treaty was signed on March 11, 1784, which completely ignored the Treaty of Salbai. The terms of the treaty were not unreasonable and were based upon the principle of preserving *status quo ante*. Both parties were to give up their conquests and all prisoners were to be released. "In short", as Dodwell observes, "much the same terms were obtained by the English from Tipu Sultan as Hastings had managed to get from the Marathas."¹ Thus this treaty could be termed as a diplomatic victory for Tipu Sultan. Warren Hastings nevertheless, regarded it as a "humiliating pacification" and the Board of Control so much disapproved of it that they were even prepared to cancel it. They did not, however, do so, as they thought "this would throw the affairs of the Company in confusion" and because "already restoration of territories and exchange of prisoners had taken place."²

The Western critics of the treaty have played up the advantages gained by Tipu Sultan ; they have completely ignored the military and financial difficulties of the English in maintaining their position in that area. Dodwell rightly remarks that "men's minds were irritable with defeat and the treaty became the object of a host of legends." Tipu Sultan was said to have subjected the deputies to unparalleled ill-treatment and indignity. He is also said to have erected gibbets opposite their encampment, and kept them in such a panic that they attempted to escape to the English ships

¹ Cambridge History of India, V, p. 288.

² Quoted in M. H. Khan, History of Tipu Sultan from Minutes of the Board, April 20, 1784, Secret Proceedings.

lying off Mangalore.¹ These stories seemed to have reached Calcutta by way of Bombay causing great resentment. The facts were very different. The commissioners had of their own accord pitched their tents near the gibbets which had been set up before the surrender of Mangalore for the execution of certain officers of Tipu Sultan's army headed by Muhammad Ali, who had entered into communication with Colonel Campbell, the commander of the English garrison in Mangalore. Tipu Sultan had perhaps chosen high ground for the gibbets so that the English garrison might see what had happened to their potential friends. When the English agents arrived, they desired their tents to be pitched on high ground to facilitate communication by signal. This is how tents came to be located near the gibbets. The allegation regarding forceful conversion of Englishmen to Islam has no basis either. Yet these fabricated stories caused unusual bitterness among the English. The Company was disappointed by an early peace which had failed to bring any territorial gains to it. There is no doubt that the English regarded the Treaty of Mangalore merely as a truce.

Tipu Sultan's one aim was the expulsion of the British from the sub continent, and for this purpose he sought support wherever he could. Unluckily for him and for the cause which he represented, this was not forthcoming, except the not very effective or steady support of the French. The Marathas and the Nizam, blind to the danger ahead, chose even to fight against him.

The Marathas were jealous of Tipu Sultan. Even during the time of Haidar 'Ali, they had tried to check the rising power of Mysore. It was Haidar 'Ali's diplomatic skill that had saved Mysore from the Maratha peril. Later, when dissensions arose among the Marathas after Madhav Rao's death in November, 1772, Haidar 'Ali asserted his might and by 1778 extended his kingdom

¹ Wilks' *Historical Sketches of South India* in an attempt to trace the history of Mysore did more than any other work to popularise these stories.

up to the right bank of the Krishna. Nana Farnavis had to swallow the bitter pill. But after the death of Haidar 'Ali, the Nana began to press the Maratha claims for the return of the lost territories. This Tipu Sultan refused. Dissatisfied with this attitude the Nana pressed the English to assist him in suppressing Tipu Sultan. During the Second Anglo-Mysore War Nana Farnavis offered to play the role of the mediator between the English and Tipu Sultan in order to enhance his prestige both at Poona and outside. But Tipu Sultan rightly refusing to be considered a client of the Marathas openly defied the Treaty of Salbai and concluded peace with the English without the mediation of the Marathas. Besides, contrary to the expectations of the Marathas, Tipu Sultan emerged from this war almost a victor and his prestige was enhanced. Therefore, the Marathas, began to make preparations for the subversion of his power, and for this purpose sought alliance with the Nizam in 1784. The Nizam, equally jealous of Tipu Sultan, complied. The two parties decided to attack Mysore jointly in the following year, and after recovering the districts which both of them had lost to Haidar 'Ali, they proposed to occupy the rest of Tipu Sultan's kingdom, which was to be equally divided between them.¹

Tipu Sultan came to know about this agreement and retorted by demanding the *subahdari* of Bijapur from the Nizam.

The Nizam sent an envoy to Nana Farnavis informing him of the situation. But the Nana was not in a position to send any immediate help to him. However the Nana became involved in a conflict with Tipu Sultan over Nargund.

The ruler of the petty state of Nargund had been conspiring with the English and the Marathas against Tipu Sultan. Venkat Rao, the *desai* or ruler of Nargund, had stopped payment of the tribute to Tipu Sultan and

¹ *Hadiqat-ul-Alam*, p. 347. For the war against the Marathas and the Nizam see *Nishan-i-Haidari*. p. 299 ff.

had openly defied his authority. He had even gone to the length of attacking Tipu Sultan's territory with the help of the *poligars* of Madanapalli.

Tipu Sultan first gave a warning to Venkat Rao to retrace his steps, and demanded the payment of the tribute. On Venkat Rao's refusal Tipu Sultan sent an army under Burhan-ud-din to fight against him. He sent an envoy to Poona to induce the Nana not to take sides with the *desai*. But the Nana would not listen to such counsels. He sent Parashram Bhao to the relief of Venkat Rao. Burhan-ud-din had by this time seized the town of Nargund. On hearing this the Nana sent Tukoji Holkar with a large force to Bhao's assistance.

Tipu Sultan was rather keen on maintaining friendly relations with the Marathas, though, quite understandably, he was not prepared to relinquish his claims to the territories his father had conquered. And when the Nana took up the cause of Venkat Rao, Tipu Sultan was indignant for it implied interference in his internal affairs. Matters came to a head when Parashram Bhao attacked the Mysore army. Qamar-ud-din Khan was sent to assist Burhan-ud-din. Thus reinforced Burhan-ud-din sent his armies against Nargund and Manoli, which were captured without much effort. After the capitulation of Nargund, Venkat Rao and his minister, Kalopant were taken prisoner and sent to the fort of Kabbaldurga along with their families. The allegations that the *desai's* daughter was reserved for the Sultan's seraglio has no basis in fact. It is corroborated neither by the Maratha records nor by any other reliable evidence. After the occupation of Nargund, Bhurhan-ud-din captured Kittur, Dodvad, Khanpur, Sada, Hoskote, Padshahpur and Jamboti whose rulers had been disloyal.

The news of Tipu Sultan's success came as a great blow to Nana Farnavis. In order to redeem his prestige he started large scale military preparations and sought a coalition with the English, the Nizam and other Maratha chieftains.

All the allies except the English gathered at Yadgir to embark upon an attack on Mysore. An argument arose between the Nizam and Nana Farnavis on the question of Bijapur, which the Nana refused to cede to the Nizam. The Nizam, in spite of the efforts of the Nana and Haripant to dissuade him, departed for Hyderabad on April 25, 1786, leaving behind 25,000 troops under the command of Tahawwar Jang.

However, the allied armies advanced towards Badami and began operations against it on May 1, 1786. After a severe encounter the commandant of the fort, who was no doubt handicapped by an acute shortage of water, surrendered unconditionally on May 21, 1786.

After the sack of Badami, the Nana left for Poona, Madhoji Bhonsle for Nagpur, and Parashram Bhao for Tasgaon, leaving their sons and commanders to renew the attack. Haripant was given charge of the campaign. He marched on Gajendragarh in June 1786, which was surrendered by Rajab Khan who was alleged to have accepted a bribe from the enemy.

Tukoji Holkar and Behropant were busy in other theatres of war. Burhan-ud-din had entrenched himself in defence at Dharwar. When Holkar advanced towards Sananur, Burhan-ud-din, who had been watching Holkar's movements and following him, attacked him near Savanur, but was repulsed by the combined forces of the Marathas. He, therefore, retreated to Jerianvatti on the Varda, thirty miles above Savanur.

Many encounters took place between March and June but they did not materially affect the situation. As the Maratha army outnumbered the forces which Tipu Sultan had at his disposal, he could not think in terms of an offensive, and was obliged to adopt a defensive strategy, moving with light troops from place to place in an effort to relieve the various beleaguered garrisons. But owing to the disloyal conduct of some of the Hindu officers of the Sultan's army, who were in league with Holkar and Behro, the Marathas could not be prevented from capturing most of the important places in Kittur, Dharwar

and Lakshmeswar districts. Only the forts of Kittur and Dharwar remained in the possession of Tipu Sultan.

Tipu Sultan in his turn tried his best, through diplomacy, to dissolve the confederacy, but he failed in these efforts. Having no choice, he set out towards Bangalore, at the end of March 1786, in defence of his kingdom. Here, he again tried for a peaceful settlement of differences, but again failed. He, therefore, left Bangalore with a large army towards Adhoni.

This was quite an unexpected move for the allies. They were thinking that the Sultan would go to the succour of Burhan-ud-din. Tipu Sultan's object in directing his arms against Adhoni was to create a diversion in favour of Burhan-ud-din who was hard pressed by the Marathas.

On hearing this surprising news Haripant at once ordered the Nizam's troops to hasten to the relief of Adhoni. The Nizam sent Mughul Ali Khan with a force of 25,000. Haripant also moved in that direction and the two forces met at Bunnoor; after crossing the Tungabhadra, they moved towards Adhoni. A severe engagement took place but it was indecisive, though both the parties claimed victory. After some time owing to the insecure supply position of the allies, they decided to evacuate Adhoni. This they did on July 2, 1786. Tipu Sultan captured the fort and town of Adhoni and secured it strongly before he crossed the Tungabhadra.

Tipu Sultan successfully crossed the flooded Tungabhadra and encamped at Itga, a commanding position to the north of the river. Haripant received this news and was much surprised by this daring move and proceeded with the whole of his force to meet Tipu Sultan. Haripant arrived at Kalkeri, about eight miles from Tipu Sultan's camp. A number of skirmishes occurred between the two armies, but no major encounter took place.

Meanwhile, the Maratha army was further strengthened when Holkar joined Haripant at Kalkeri. But after sometime it began to face serious difficulties, because

of the shortage of supplies and the spread of disease. Haripant, therefore, proceeded to Savanur. Tipu Sultan followed him. His attacks on the Maratha army spread consternation in their ranks and they were compelled to fall back with considerable losses to a position to the left of the town of Savanur. Here also they sustained repeated losses at the hands of Tipu Sultan. Haripant quitted Savanur and moved eastward. At Kalkeri Tipu Sultan made a night attack on the allies and threw their forces in great confusion. He followed up this victory by capturing Bahadur Benda, a formidable fort. Later, Tipu Sultan resorted to harassing the enemy, inflicting on him severe losses.

In spite of his successes Tipu Sultan made overtures for peace to the Marathas. The Nana rejected all these entreaties in the hope of English military aid. It was only after Cornwallis had expressed his inability to help the Peshwa that the Nana allowed Haripant to receive peace proposals from Tipu Sultan.

Tipu Sultan proposed that the Marathas should recognise his sovereignty over the territory between Tungabhadra and Krishna. On his part he would be prepared to Pay 48 lakhs of rupees to them. After many a proposal and counter-proposal peace was negotiated on conditions that Tipu Sultan would release Kalopant and restore Adhoni, Nargund and Kittur to their respective chiefs, but not Savanur, and that in future the allies would recognize his sovereignty, and address him as *Padshah* or Nawab Tipu Sultan, Fath 'Ali Khan. The treaty of peace between Tipu Sultan and the Peshwa was signed in April, 1787.

No doubt this peace was a diplomatic defeat for Tipu Sultan but he was actuated by the motive of establishing normal relations with the Marathas, in view of Lord Cornwallis' military and diplomatic preparations against him.

While returning from Adhoni, Tipu Sultan annexed Rayadrug and Harpanahalli to Mysore. On arriving

at Seringapatam, he adopted the title of *Padshah*. Seven lakhs of rupees were distributed among the poor on this occasion, and the *khutbah* was recited in the name of Tipu Sultan instead of the effete Mughul Emperor. It was also about this time that Tipu Sultan struck new rupees and called them *Imami*,¹ introduced the Muhammadi Era² and gave orders for the construction of a throne of gold ornamented with precious jewels in the shape of a tiger. He also laid the foundation stone of a university and a mosque.

Tipu Sultan was very much disappointed by the French attitude during his war with the Marathas, as they did not come to his assistance and remained neutral all the time. It seems their policy was to prevent the South Indian Powers from fighting among themselves and to unite them under their own leadership in a confederacy against the English.

Alarmed at the English intrigues with the other Deccan Powers against Mysore, and not optimistic about the assistance from the French authorities in India, Tipu Sultan decided to send an embassy to the court of Louis XVI with the object of directly negotiating an alliance with the French Government and securing its military assistance against his enemies. He entrusted this mission to the embassy which he had already sent to Turkey at the end of 1785. The envoys after finishing their work at Constantinople were to go to Paris, though they actually did not proceed beyond Constantinople and were recalled by Tipu Sultan.

In January 1787, Tipu Sultan despatched another mission to France. This was very well received in Paris. Louis XVI gave audience to the envoys and treated them with marked distinction and honour. He assured them of

¹ For the coins of Tipu Sultan see *Nishan-i-Haidari*, p. 237. Also Henderson, *The Coins of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan* and Taylor, *The Coins of Tipu Sultan*.

² On the reform of the calendar by Tipu Sultan, see *Nishan-i-Haidari*, pp. 237-238. Lewis Rice, *Mysore*, I, 811, Dr. Hidayat Hussain, *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, pp. 161 and *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* edited by Mahmud Hussain.

his desire to maintain friendly relations with Tipu Sultan and as a sign of his goodwill and token of friendship granted them permission to take with them to Mysore, as desired by Tipu Sultan, a physician, a surgeon and several artificers. However, as regards the proposal of an offensive and defensive alliance, he informed the envoys that he was unable to enter into any alliance with Tipu Sultan as it would constitute an infringement of the Treaty of Versailles and would lead to war with the English and since France was in the grip of a social, economic and political crisis she could not risk such a war.

Tipu Sultan was glad that his envoy had brought with them artists and workmen, but he was naturally disappointed at the failure of their mission to secure an offensive and defensive alliance with France.

In spite of Tipu Sultan's constant efforts the French attitude towards Mysore remained unhelpful. It was evident from the fact that when Tipu Sultan received the intelligence of the English intrigues against him at the courts of Hyderabad, Poona, Gwalior and Nagpur, he asked the French, still considering them his friends, to inquire from the English the object of the treaty which they had concluded with the Nizam. But the French authorities declined to comply with the request. It is probable that the French were cool because Tipu Sultan had rejected their proposal for granting them a monopoly of the trade and commerce within his dominion.

Apart from the French, Tipu Sultan tried to form an alliance with some of the Muslim Powers, notably the Ottoman empire.

As has been mentioned above, Tipu Sultan had sent an embassy to Turkey towards the end of 1785. The objects behind this move were various. Firstly, the envoys were to obtain an investiture from the caliph. Secondly, they were to obtain a commitment with regard to military assistance against the English, who were Tipu Sultan's most formidable enemies and were bent upon his destruction. Thirdly, they were to obtain commercial privileges in the

Ottoman empire and bring technicians from Constantinople who would be able to introduce and develop various industries in Mysore. Tipu Sultan was eager to promote the trade, commerce and industry of his dominions; for he held the view that the political decline of the Muslims was the result of their apathy towards trade and industry and that it was because the Europeans had seriously applied themselves to these tasks that they were so strong. Tipu Sultan's envoys could not achieve all the objectives. They did obtain the confirmation of Tipu Sultan as the ruler of Mysore and the title of 'an independent king. But in the other two objects they failed. Since at this juncture Turkey was threatened by Russia and Austria, she could not afford to antagonize the English by a treaty of alliance with Mysore. Moreover, the British also exerted diplomatic pressure on the Ottoman government not to take any action that would be harmful to the English interests in India. Thus this embassy too did not achieve the objective for which it was despatched.¹

The English were not happy with the Treaty of Mangalore. Ever since the conclusion of this treaty, they had been planning for war against Tipu Sultan. They had been continuously intriguing with the other Powers of southern India, specially the Nizam and the Marathas. They were also inciting revolts in Tipu Sultan's dominions and giving refuge to his refractory subjects.

During the Maratha-Mysore War the English, however, took no sides. The object of the English was to increase their own power. The Mysore-Maratha War was likely to weaken both the contestants. The British were sure that sooner or later they would have to fight against Mysore to establish their supremacy in India. But before they did it they would prefer to see Mysore weakened. It was after the defeat of the combined forces of the Marathas and the Nizam by Tipu Sultan that the

¹ For Tipu Sultan's correspondence with the Ottoman caliph see Hikmat Bayur, *Maysor Sultani Tipu II-e Osmanli Padishah-Larindan I. Abdulhamid VE III. Salfi Arasindaki Mektuplasma*, Ankara, 1948.

English seriously started final preparations for a decisive war with Mysore. They were also driven to this decision when they came to know about the diplomatic activities of Tipu Sultan in seeking help from Turkey and France.

Lord Cornwallis who was the governor-general at this time began preparations for the destruction of Tipu Sultan's power. He directed his attention to the organisation of the Company's army and finances. He achieved this objective by December, 1787. Having made these preparations, he started negotiations for an alliance with the Marathas and the Nizam directed against Tipu Sultan. Cornwallis gave assurances to the Marathas that all the territory between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers would be handed over to them after its recovery from Tipu Sultan. Similarly Cornwallis stirred up the cupidity of the Nizam by dangling before him the prospect of recovering those of his territories which Haidar 'Ali had wrested from him. Thus after completing all the arrangements Cornwallis decided to wage war on Tipu Sultan. All that was necessary was to manufacture some incident for a *casus belli*.

Soon the justification for war was forthcoming. It was provided by the attack of Tipu Sultan on Travancore as punishment of the misdeeds of the raja. The English decided to intervene in the dispute. Tipu Sultan on his part was ready to settle his dispute with the raja without resorting to force of arms. But Cornwallis wanted war and not peace because, as he wrote to Medows, the governor of Madras; "At present we have every prospect of aid from the country powers, whilst he (Tipu Sultan) can expect no assistance from France."

The English set themselves to the task of organising a confederacy against Tipu Sultan. Cornwallis was anxious to obtain the support of the Indian princes and particularly of the Peshwa, in order that "the war should be speedily terminated not only from the point of view of the Company's finances, but also in order to preclude the coming of help from France". To achieve

this end Cornwallis used cajolery and inducements. He even employed threats, and appealed to the religious sentiments of the Hindu rulers. After long negotiations the Nana and the Company arrived at a final agreement on June 1, 1790, for a joint attack on Tipu Sultan who, in his turn, had been trying his best to prevent the consummation of such an alliance against him. But the protests of the English at the presence of Tipu Sultan's *wakils* at Poona induced the Nana to dismiss the *wakils*. The Nana was now definitely on the side of the English. The reason why he carried on negotiations with the *wakils* of Tipu Sultan was simply to extract the money which they promised to pay to him in case he did not join hands with the English.

According to the agreement newly arrived at, the Marathas and the Nizam were required immediately to attack Tipu Sultan's northern possessions. The English had to provide two battalions each to the Nizam and the Marathas but their expenses were to be borne by them. In the event of victory all conquests were to be equally divided. The *poligars* and the *zamindars* formerly dependent on the Peshwa and the Nizam as well as those who had been deprived of their lands by Haidar 'Ali and Tipu Sultan, were to be reinstated on paying a *nazr*, which was to be equally divided among the three powers. Thereafter they were to become the vassals of the Peshwa or the Nizam.

After concluding these agreements, Cornwallis opened negotiations for obtaining the support of the tributaries and refractory subjects of Tipu Sultan. He wrote to the Bombay government to encourage the Malabar chieftains to rebel against Tipu Sultan and promised them his support in the undertaking.

Treaties were concluded with the Bibi of Cannanore, the raja of Coorg, the raja of Cochin, the raja of Chirakkal, the raja of Kadattanad and the raja of Kottayam. Negotiations were also started with Rani Lakshmi Ammani of Mysore, and in 1790 General Medows informed her that if the allies proved victorious in the

war, the English would gladly restore the kingdom of Mysore to its rightful rulers, but the question of the division of territories could only be considered later.

Meanwhile Tipu Sultan was not inactive. He alone among Indian rulers had the vision to seek help from outside India. He tried his best to counter the intrigues of the English at Poona. Similarly he left no stone unturned to induce the Nizam to join him instead of joining the English. But just as his efforts failed at Poona, so at Hyderabad too, they did not bear any fruit. Tipu Sultan's efforts to gain the help of the French also ended in failure. He wrote letters to Louis XVI several times impressing on him the urgency of the situation. But owing to the internal conditions of France the French monarch was not in a position to render any assistance to him. The result was that unlike the Second Anglo-Mysore War, the Third War had to be fought by Tipu Sultan single-handed against a combination of the English, the Marathas and the Nizam.

According to the English plan of the campaign, General Medows with the main army was first to take possession of the Coimbatore province and the bordering districts below the Ghats and, having secured this rich country as a base of supply, he was to ascend into Mysore through the Gajalhatti Pass. General Abercromby, the Governor of Bombay, on the other hand, was to reduce Tipu Sultan's possessions on the Malabar coast, while General Kelly was to penetrate from the centre of Coromandel into Baramahal for the defence of the Carnatic.

General Medows began his assault on May 26, 1790. He advanced towards Coimbatore and occupied it on July 21, without meeting resistance as the city had been evacuated.¹

Tipu Sultan sent Mir Mu'in-ud-din Khan, better known as Sayyid Sahib, to meet the English advance but by a series of clever movements, Sayyid Sahib was driven away, and later he was so hard pressed that he decamped

¹ *Nishan-i-Haidari*. pp. 341 ff.

from the scene. This gave the English a free hand and the country lay open to English attack. Consequently the English could seize the area up to Dindigul. Next in turn Palghat was surrendered to the English. Satyamangalam followed suit.

While the English were consolidating their position Tipu Sultan appeared before Coimbatore on May 24 and remained there throughout the month of June watching the movements of Medows with the intention of marching against him. Finding the English movements slow, Tipu Sultan retired to Seringapatam. After making preparations there he left Seringapatam on September 2 with 40,000 men and a large train of artillery. His first encounter with the English army took place at Satyamangalam, from which he emerged victorious. After this Tipu Sultan inflicted sharp blows on the British troops in different quarters. On November 10 he was narrowly prevented from destroying the force of Colonel Maxwell, successor to Kelly; six days later Medows came up and the British force was saved. But Tipu Sultan's rapid movements still constituted a considerable danger and it was thought necessary that Cornwallis himself should come to the scene of action. Cornwallis, who did not like to admit defeats, acknowledges, "We have lost time and our adversary has gained reputation which are two most valuable things in war". Cornwallis took a new point of attack, moved by Vellore and Ambur towards Bangalore and took position within ten miles of that city. Tipu Sultan immediately proceeded towards Bangalore to meet the English army there and to defend the city. He did what he could to strengthen its defences and set out to check the advance of the enemy.

Floyd, one of the English commanders, sustained defeat in an encounter with Tipu Sultan, who swiftly moved to Kangeri, nine miles from Bangalore. But Cornwallis succeeded in taking the town of Bangalore by a fierce attack. The Mysorean troops after offering stiff resistance retired into the fort. The English

plundered the town, all kinds of excesses were committed and considerable property was looted.

Tipu Sultan was preparing for a final attack on the English army but the treachery of Krishna Rao foiled his designs. Cornwallis, at the advice of Krishna Rao, attacked the fort of Bangalore and took it in the face of fierce opposition. Cornwallis was fully conscious of his weak supply position and it seems very likely that if Krishna Rao had not come to his rescue, he would have been defeated by Tipu Sultan. Tipu Sultan was shocked at the fall of Bangalore. He took stern action against the faithless Krishna Rao by putting him and his three brothers to death who were his accomplices in the plot.

The Nizam's forces joined the English contingent at Kottapalli. The united armies then returned to Bangalore to make preparations for an advance on Seringapatam. A general action took place near the capital city. The Mysore army fought with great valour, defending every post and standing up to the fire of the musketry and at last the day ended in favour of Tipu Sultan.

Cornwallis harassed by the inclemency of the weather, epidemics in the army, scarcity of grain and the death of a vast number of bullocks, decided to retreat. Cornwallis ordered all his generals to retire from Tipu Sultan's territory. The English together with the Maratha and the Nizam's forces took the decision to postpone operations against Seringapatam till the next season. The allied armies arrived in the neighbourhood of Bangalore on July 11, 1791.

Immediately after arriving at Bangalore Cornwallis began preparations for the next campaign against Seringapatam. Since in the last campaign he had suffered from inadequate supplies and faulty communications, this time he established an uninterrupted line of communication with the Carnatic and the Nizam's dominions so that supplies could easily reach the allied armies.

Although the Company was in favour of opening negotiations with Mysore, Cornwallis was totally opposed

to it. On July 15, he marched towards Hosur, situated 28 miles south-east of Bangalore, which he occupied without meeting any resistance. Many other forts and hill fastnesses surrendered within a few days.

Cornwallis had planned to isolate Seringapatam by conquering all the forts around it. In this effort he did not succeed. Tipu Sultan himself was busy trying to recover Coimbatore, and his commanders were engaged in defending the forts scattered in different parts of his State. Qamar-ud-din Khan, deputed by Tipu Sultan, actually succeeded in capturing Coimbatore from Major Cuppage and Lieut. Chalmers after inflicting a defeat on them on November 2. Taken as a whole, however, the English had been gaining the upper hand near Bangalore by conquering the various strongholds. Tipu Sultan's forces offered resistance but it was weak. Gradually conquering all obstacles Cornwallis approached Seringapatam.¹

On February 5, 1792, the lines were drawn around Tipu Sultan's capital. The English army consisted of 22,000 men, 44 field guns and a battering train of 42 pieces. The Nizam's army under Prince Sikandar Jah had about 18,000 horse. The Maratha army under Haripant possessed 12,000 horse. Tipu Sultan had arranged his defences in a fairly thorough fashion. In view of this Cornwallis considered it too risky to attack in the day time and decided to make a surprise night attack. On February 6 in the night, Cornwallis ordered his men to make a final onslaught on the Mysorean defences. The attack was successful. Tipu Sultan had not expected any attack until the arrival of Parashram and General Abercromby. Meanwhile he was also busy in strengthening his other defences. Moreover English discipline and perseverance and the rapidity of their movements had taken Tipu Sultan completely by surprise. By February 24, the allied armies, specially that of the English, had come to command a fairly dominating position, but

¹ Dirom, *A Narrative of the Campaign in India which terminated the war with Tippoo Sultan*, London, 1793.

a definite victory was not yet in sight. It was at this stage that both the contestants started negotiations for peace. Finding an outright victory improbable Cornwallis wanted to conclude the war by negotiation. In this connection his allies were also pressing him as it was in their interest not to destroy the power of Tipu Sultan completely. Cornwallis, three days before peace was signed, wrote to Sir Charles Oakley, governor of Madras, that "an arrangement which effectually destroys the dangerous power of Tipu Sultan will be more beneficial to the public than the capture of Seringapatam, and it will render the final settlement with our allies, who seem very partial to it, much easy." Cornwallis's behaviour during the negotiations was fluctuating in accordance with the condition of his army. One incident would suffice to illustrate this: On one occasion Cornwallis was expecting the Maratha force and supplies to arrive; when, however, they did not arrive and he saw his army dwindling by sickness and starvation he showed a disposition to compromise. But on the arrival of the Marathas, conscious of an accession of strength, he went back on his words.

After protracted negotiations an agreement was arrived at and the treaty was signed on February 24, 1792. By this treaty, one half of the kingdom of Tipu Sultan was to be ceded to the allies; three crores and thirty lakhs of rupees were to be paid by Tipu Sultan either in gold *mohrs*, pagodas or bullion of which one crore sixty-five lakhs were to be paid immediately and the rest in three instalments at intervals not exceeding four months each; all prisoners belonging to the four powers and held since the time of Haidar 'Ali were to be released; and, finally, two of the three eldest sons of Tipu Sultan were to be given as hostages for the due observance of the terms of the treaty.² Later another article to the treaty was added to the resentment of Tipu Sultan and that was to grant independence to the raja of Coorg. It was no

¹ *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V, p. 337.

² *Dirom*, pp. 225 ff.

doubt a very harsh treaty. The object of the English was to put an end to the danger which came to them from Tipu Sultan by securing as much territory and money from him as they could.

Tipu Sultan was hard hit by this treaty. It sapped his financial and military resources. He had fought against overwhelming odds. Had he been confronted only with the English, it might have been a different story. Continuous warfare had been a heavy drain on the resources of his principality. Moreover, the large sums of money which still remained to be paid to the allies were a crushing burden. The ravages caused by the Maratha army had left the country devastated.

After the departure of the allied armies from Serinapatam, Tipu Sultan employed himself in repairing the ravages of war and in suppressing the refractory *poligars* and other mischievous elements. He tried to improve his relations with the Marathas and was partially successful in this. But Tipu Sultan's relations with the Nizam did not show any signs of improvement.

Tipu Sultan's constant effort was to break the isolation created for him by Cornwallis. He not only tried to cultivate good relations with the neighbouring powers but also wrote to Napoleon and Sultan Selim of Turkey.¹ During the governor-generalship of Sir John Shore the English followed a policy of non-intervention in India, as laid down in Pitt's India Act of 1784. But after Wellesley came to India as Earl of Mornington he adopted a policy of aggression and aggrandizement.

Noticing this change in the policy, Tipu Sultan also got busy strengthening the fortifications of his capital, in remounting his cavalry, in recruiting and in disciplining his infantry and in building up a navy. He encouraged agriculture in his country, which was soon restored to its former prosperity.

This made the English again jealous of Tipu Sultan. They feared that owing to his energy, ability, and ambition he might once more become a formidable rival.

¹ Hikmet Bayur, *Maysor Sultan Tipu II Osmanli Padishah*.

Wellesley, therefore, decided upon the annihilation of Tipu Sultan's power. The English spread all kinds of stories regarding Tipu Sultan's aggressive designs. This was meant only to find an excuse for an attack on Mysore. They charged Tipu Sultan with entering into an alliance with the French. But after all if the English could form alliances against Tipu Sultan, what was wrong in his attempting to seek allies wherever he could? Actually, however, he did not put his hopes in France any more. Already in 1793, when the English and the French had been at war, the French in India had instigated Tipu Sultan to attack their enemies pointing out that it was a good opportunity for him to recover the territories he had lost by the Treaty of Seringapatam to which Tipu Sultan had replied that all his misfortunes were due to his connections with the French. They had betrayed him in 1783 by making peace with the English, leaving him to continue the war with them alone.

Wellesley himself reached Madras on January 9, 1799. Through a treaty of subsidiary alliance Wellesley had ensured the support of the Nizam in the forthcoming war with Tipu Sultan. He had also obtained necessary assurances from the Marathas. While Wellesley had made up his mind to attack Mysore he forwarded a letter from the Ottoman caliph, Sultan Selim, to Tipu Sultan. In this letter addressed to the Mysore ruler the caliph gave full details of the invasion of Egypt by the French and of their designs to conquer Arabia and extirpate the Muslims. Further, he advised Tipu Sultan to refrain from hostile activities against the English at the instigation of the French. To this Tipu Sultan replied respectfully conveying his acceptance of the advice. But while negotiations were being conducted, there came an unprovoked attack on Mysore. The correspondence which Wellesley was carrying on with Tipu Sultan was obviously a hypocritical move.

The argument that Wellesley attacked Tipu Sultan because he apprehended that the French would invade India in which case they would be joined by Tipu Sultan

has little force. If this explanation is correct, then Wellesley should also have attacked the Marathas and the Nizam because no reliance could be placed on their friendship as they had French officers in their armies and would have joined them in the event of French attack on India.

The danger of the Afghan invasion by Zaman Shah in support of Tipu Sultan's effort also existed only in Wellesley's imagination. If Zaman Shah had at all any mind to give help to Tipu Sultan, this possibility too was removed when English diplomacy created a critical situation on the western border of Afghanistan forcing Zaman Shah to abandon all aggressive designs.¹

Wellesley entrusted General Harris on 14 February, 1799 to bring about the final overthrow of Tipu Sultan. The preparations of the English were complete. The general in command had full powers. British ships were lying at sea, successfully guarding it against French vessels. The armies of the Nizam and the Peshwa were sure to come in handy. The Carnatic army was fully equipped. And above all Wellesley himself was at Madras directing every move in advance. On February 3, General Harris moved from Vellore and General Stuart from Cannanore. On March 8, Stuart inflicted a defeat on Tipu Sultan at Sedasere. Again on the 27th Tipu Sultan sustained defeat at Mallavelley at the hands of Harris. Arthur Wellesley was in command of the contingent from Hyderabad. Tipu Sultan fought bravely and displayed brilliant strategy. But his efforts were all in vain because of the treachery of Tipu Sultan's own generals, and he was obliged to turn to his capital. The English armies met before Seringapatam and a few days later on April 17, the siege began.² The English were compelled to hurry operations owing to the lateness of the season and the inadequacy of supplies—then a common weakness of the English in all the south India campaigns. By the evening

¹ Zaman Shah advanced at the end of 1798 to Lahore, but early in 1799 he left Lahore for Afghanistan.

² *Nishan-i-Haidari*, pp. 381 ff; also, Beatson, *A View of the Origin and Conduct, of the War with Tippoo Sultan*.

of the 3rd the walls were so battered that a practicable breach was made, and the assault was decided on for the 4th in day time. Shortly after mid-day the English troops, in conjunction with the treacherous elements in the fort, crossed the Kaveri, passed to the glacis and the ditch without a shot being fired at and stormed the ramparts and the breach.

Tipu Sultan was taking food when he was informed of this attack. He at once left off eating, washed his hands and hastened towards the breach on horseback. But before he could reach it, the English had already hoisted their flag over it and were advancing to seize the ramparts. However, the presence of Tipu Sultan inspired his troops to resistance. But when his troops were exposed to the fire of the English detachments both from the inner and outer ramparts, consternation spread among them. Tipu Sultan's efforts to rally them were unsuccessful. Tipu Sultan fought valiantly and tried his best to stem the flow of English soldiers through the breaches, but in doing so received fatal wounds. Later his body was found among the hundreds of dead. That was the end of Tipu Sultan's glorious career.¹

The English committed great excesses on the night of May 4. Almost every house was plundered, a large number of buildings were set fire to and the inhabitants were subjected to all kinds of atrocities. In fact, according to Arthur Wellesley, nothing could have exceeded what was done on May 4.² The death of Tipu Sultan caused jubilation among the English. It was commemorated by them by thanks-offering in their churches. All the servants of the Company who had participated in the war against Tipu Sultan received rewards. The governor-general himself was awarded a marquissate and came to be known as the Marquis of Wellesley.

¹ *Nishan-i-Haidari*, p. 392.

² Owen, Wellesley's despatches quoted by M. H. Khan in *History of Tipu Sultan*, p. 32.

With the fall of Seringapatam the principality of Mysore lay at the feet of the English. The sons of Tipu Sultan were exiled. The principality was partitioned. The English had the lion's share. The Nizam got a small portion. The central part of Mysore was restored to one of the descendants of the old ruling family. In fact, as Mill wrote, "The Raja was a species of screen, put up to hide, at once from Indian and from European eyes, the actual aggrandizement which the British territory had received." Tipu Sultan was the most formidable opponent of the English in India. After his removal, the English became truly 'Paramount' in the sub continent.

CHAPTER XV

TIPU SULTAN (II) Administrative reforms

The Mughul administrative system was built on such solid foundations that even after the decline of the Empire the successor governments did not consider it expedient to make any fundamental changes in it. In most of the States founded during this period the structure of government was mainly a replica of the Mughul system only with a minimum of modifications to suit local conditions. Mysore under Haidar 'Ali and Tipu Sultan was, like the Mughul Empire, a monarchy, but it was not an absolute monarchy in the sense that the basic law was the *Shar'*. In Islam, apart from the principle of equality on which the whole structure of society is based, rulers exercise sovereign powers within the limits of the *Shar'* and as its trustees. However, not all Muslim rulers have respected these limits and some have behaved like absolute monarchs. But there is no doubt that Tipu Sultan was conscious of the legal position and admitted its validity in a letter to the Nizam in which he says that the people of his kingdom "constitute a unique trust held for God, the Real Master."¹ Tipu Sultan went even farther when under the influence of the ideas of the French Revolution he described himself as a "citizen". He was thus much in advance of the contemporary rulers in the east anxious to serve his people to the best of his ability. He took a personal interest in all that affected the interests of the people, and spared no pains to make them happy and prosperous. He attained considerable success in

¹ Quoted from the *Records in the National Archives of India* by Muhibbul Hasan Khan in his *History of Tipu Sultan*, 1931, p. 330. It is rather significant that Tipu Sultan called his government *Sarkar-i-Khudabad* or Government bestowed by God.

this objective. Mill in assessing his achievements considers his territories to be "the best cultivated and its population the most flourishing in India," and Tipu Sultan himself to be a ruler who "sustains an advantageous comparison with the greatest princes of the East".¹ It has been said that Tipu Sultan's government was highly centralized. This is true ; but in a monarchy centralization is a natural tendency.

Gifted with an inventive mind Tipu Sultan introduced a number of reforms in the actual working of the governmental machinery. By virtue of his position as a monarch he constituted the highest executive, judicial and legislative authority. From the times of the Hindu predecessors of Haidar 'Ali the administration of Mysore was conducted by ministries or departments which were known as *Katchehris*. The traditional number of the departments was eighteen, but many new ones were added by Tipu Sultan,² ultimately numbering ninety-nine.

Of these seven *katchehris* were considered to be the most important and may be said to have had the status of ministries. The heads of these ministries were generally called *mirs* who were assisted by Boards consisting of the highest officials. The decisions taken at the meetings of these Boards were brought to the notice of Tipu Sultan, and on important issues he would give his written approval. Occasionally the heads of the various ministries met for discussion with a view to bringing about co-ordination in the work of administration.

As under the Mughuls Tipu Sultan's minister of finance occupied the leading position by virtue of his office. He was called *mir asaf* and was also known as *diwan*. He presided over the Board of revenue and finance. Besides him the Board had five other senior officers who were also known as *mirs asaf*. Mir Sadiq held the office of *diwan* and was paid an annual salary

¹ *History of British India* (London, 1848), VI, p. 105.

² *Nishan-i-Haidari*, p. 375. The reason assigned by the author for creating ninety-nine departments is that Allah has as many attributes which refer to the administration of the affairs of the universe.

of 2,100 *pagodas*. The next in importance was the department of military administration. *Mir miran* was the official designation of the head of this department ; the other officers constituting along with him the Board for its administration bore the same title. Purniya who was the head of this department had the same salary as Mir Sadiq. Tipu Sultan had conferred the title of *mir miran* on several officers in 1793, Sayyid Ghaffar being the first recipient of the honour.¹ There was a separate department for the section of the army known as *zumra* which was mainly recruited from the local population. The officer-in-charge was called *mir miran zumrah*.² The other major departments were under the *mir sadr* (ordnance and garrison), the *malik-ut-tujjar* (commerce) ; *mir yam* (navy) and *mir khazain* (treasury and mint). The royal treasury was called (*tosha-khanah*) which had separate sections for bullion (*naqdi*) and other costly articles (*jins*). It is to be noted that valuable documents like the *hukmnamahs*, bearing the signature or the seal of the ruler were also deposited in the *tosha-khanah*. Another important department, though not of the same status, was that of post and intelligence. It was in the charge of a *darughah*, assisted by a number of other officers. Besides these there were numerous other minor departments.

Some of the officials posted at the capital had an important position by virtue of their office and responsibility attached to it. The *kotwal* may be especially mentioned. He was responsible for maintaining law and order. He was given wide powers to discharge his duties efficiently. The office of the *arz-begi* was also important because this official had to present the petitions of the people to the ruler.

The *qazi* of Seringapatam was ex-officio the chief *qazi* of the entire State. Tipu Sultan had wisely retained the age-old *panchayat* system for the settlement of

¹ *Nishan*, p. 375.

² *Zumrah-i-gham na bashad*. It has been suggested that this was a council of advisers which had been created because the Sultan wanted to introduce a democratic element in his government. Unfortunately, however, it served as a puppet in the hands of the notorious Mir Sadiq. See *Nishan*, pp. 378-79.

minor cases in the villages. These were of great assistance to the village *patels*. In the *ta'luqas* and the districts the '*amils* and the *asafs* decided some cases. In addition to these there was a *qazi* and a *pandit* in each town to decide the cases of the Muslims and the Hindus respectively. Parties dissatisfied with their judgements could file appeals at the *sadar 'adalat* in the capital. Here too there was a Muslim and a Hindu judge to hear the appeals. Tipu Sultan himself was the highest court of appeal. The *Shar'iat* Law was enforced. Himself a good Muslim Tipu Sultan expected his Muslim subjects to follow the precepts of Islam in their daily lives. Special instructions were issued to the army to observe the rules of conduct laid down by Islam.

Tipu Sultan's life was a struggle. His short but eventful reign was dominated by fighting. He had ascended the throne in the midst of a war and he sacrificed his life fighting a battle in defence of his realm. No wonder he paid great attention to the administration of military affairs and the organisation and equipment of his forces. He spared no pains to bring his fighting machine into line with contemporary standards in respect of training, discipline and armaments. His opponents knew that "Tippoo is the only prince who has persevered in disciplining and arranging his army after a regular plan."¹

To form an idea of the elaborate working of Tipu Sultan's military organization one has to peruse the pages of his Army Manual and the *hukmnamahs* issued to the departments and officers concerned.

The *Fath-al-Mujahidin*², as his Army Manual is called, is an extremely interesting and informative work. Besides the material usually found in Army Manuals it contains other information which is meant for the benefit of Muslim soldiers who formed the bulk of Tipu Sultan's forces. On the one hand the book contains the rules

¹ William Macleod in *Military Sundry Books*, quoted by M. H. Khan, p.347.

² The Persian Text edited by Mahmud Husain has been published by Urdu Academy, Sindh, Karachi, 1950. The references in this volume are to the pages of this edition.

and regulations of Tipu Sultan's army, the principles of strategy and detailed military exercises meant for different occasions and on the other hand it has a discourse on the teachings of Islam particularly with reference to *jihad*.¹ From the very beginning of his career Tipu Sultan had realized that there was a good deal to learn from the West so far as the art of war was concerned. From his own experience and from what had happened elsewhere in the sub continent, he had come to the conclusion that his own army should be organized on Western lines. Thus he introduced far-reaching reforms in the organization of his armed forces and adopted modern weapons of war on a large scale.

For the administration of the army the Sultan had set up eleven different departments, *viz.*, Infantry; Military Engineering; Cavalry; Ordnance; Commissariat; Pastures and Meadows; Pay Establishment; Navy; Construction of ships and boats; Military stores; and Inspectorate. The kingdom was divided into 22 military districts, each placed under a *sipahdar*. In the appointment of a *sipahdar* preference was given to the educated, but this qualification was waived in the case of a highly experienced person.² The army was divided into *qushuns*, *qushuns* into *risalahs* and *risalahs* into *juqs*. The *sipahdars* had the charge of the *qushuns*, while the officer commanding the *risalahs* and *juqs* were called *risalahdars* and *juqdars*. Below these ranks were the junior officers called the *sarkhails*, the *jamadars*, the *dafadars* and the *yazakdars*. Since Tipu Sultan was his own commander-in-chief the scope of the *sipahdar's* powers and duties in respect of his *qushun* was fairly extensive. Besides the overall control of the affairs of his *qushun* he was to look after the conduct and activities of the officers under him. He recommended promotions and rewards for the meritorious and punishments for the defaulters up to the rank of a *juqdar*.³ The cases of

¹ *Fath-al-Mujahidin*, Editor's Introduction, p. x.

² *Fath-al-Mujahidin*, p. 119.

³ *Ibid*, p. 120.

risalahdars were forwarded to the Sultan for his orders.¹ In the monthly muster rolls of the troops and inspection of their equipment and arms he was assisted by the *bakhshis* and *mutasaddis*. The joint report of the three officers was submitted to the ruler. The guns and fire-arms were kept in good condition and one *tola* of oil per gun was supplied to the soldiers twice a month. When faced with difficulties in the course of a battle the *sipahdar* was to consult his *risalahdars*, and obtain their views in writing if they disagreed with him.²

The *bakshi's* main duty was to prepare the pay rolls of the *qushun* and disburse the salaries on the first day of every month in the presence of the *sipahdar*. He was assisted by a *mutasaddi*. Salaries of the soldiers who were unable to present themselves in time were kept for five days in sealed purses. For each *qushun* one Persian knowing and one Urdu knowing *bakhshi* and *mutasaddi* were appointed. The *risalahdar's* main function in peace times was to hold the parade of his *risalah*. The parade was held six days in a week, Friday being a holiday.³ The *Fath-al-Mujahidin* describes different types of exercises and parades. It also contains an account of the rights and duties of the officers and men and rules regarding the duties of sentries in the time of war, their rounds and also the manner of relieving guard. Detailed instructions have been laid down in respect of uniforms and leave rules.⁴ The *juqdar's* duty was to keep the officers (*risalahdar* and *sipahdar*) informed of the condition of the soldiers and their equipment. During the parade he was to see that everybody did as he was ordered to do ; and if any one committed a mistake it was his duty to correct him. For meritorious work a *yasaqchi* was promoted to a *juqdarship*. In later years the Sultan reorganised the army administration and some changes were made in the position and responsibilities of the various officers;

¹ *Fath.*, p. 120.

² *Ibid.*, p. 121.

³ Muhibbul Hasan Khan (p. 349) mentions Thursday, but the *Fath* is clear on the point. See p. 124.

⁴ *Fath*, Chapter IV.

the *bakhshi* became the most important officer of the army.

Besides the cavalry there were the *silahdars* who may be called irregular horsemen. They were not strictly governed by the rules and procedure laid down for the regular army. Their commander looked after their affairs and made such arrangements as he thought fit.

The size and the strength of Tipu Sultan's army changed from time to time in accordance with his resources and requirements of the hour. At the time of the Third Anglo-Mysore War he had 18,000 cavalry and 5,000 regular infantry ; in addition to these forces he had 1,00,000 irregulars who were utilized for garrisoning the forts, and collecting the revenue. The loss of nearly one-half of his territories after his defeat in this war necessitated a reduction in the strength of the army. Tipu Sultan had taken the fullest advantage of his contact with the Westerners. He had adopted their methods of training and discipline with modifications to suit local conditions and also introduced many of their arms. He had also made arrangements for their production within the country. Unlike other Indian princes he had not taken into his service European officers and soldiers in large numbers, nor allowed the few whom he had employed to wield any political influence. In spite of his efforts to cultivate friendly relations with France there were actually fewer Frenchmen in his service than in that of the Nizam or the Marathas.

Of the indigenous rulers Tipu Sultan was one of the few who recognised the importance of naval power. Indeed his father himself had attempted to build up a navy, but his attempts had proved abortive. In 1768 the desertion of his naval commander, Stannet, caused the loss of many ships. This loss, however, did not deter him from undertaking the task once more. But misfortune persisted and the navy he built for the second time was almost completely destroyed through British action

at Mangalore in 1780. Tipu Sultan on succeeding his father, had to turn his attention to the building up of an efficient army, but even so, he possessed a number of war ships. These were, however, meant for protecting merchant vessels, and were not fit for large scale naval operations. Tipu Sultan had realized very early that in his wars against the British or as a matter of fact against any other European power his ships would not serve much useful purpose. This bitter truth was brought home to him after his reverses in 1792. He lost no time in deciding to build up a sizable navy. In 1793 he built a naval college at Bhatkul for training in modern methods of naval warfare. He is also stated to have ordered the compilation of a book on naval warfare. In 1796 he issued detailed instructions regarding his scheme of strengthening the navy and its implementation. The scheme could not be implemented *in toto* because of his death in the Fourth Mysore War. It would be worth while however to form an idea of the main features, of this splendid project of Tipu Sultan, because if he had survived to give it a practical shape he would have been the first Indian monarch to have erected a navy in the true sense of the term.

In 1796 a *hukmnamah* or ordinance was issued. It laid down the programme and regulations for Tipu Sultan's navy.

A Board of Admiralty with headquarters at Seringapatam was organised with eleven *mirs yam* or Lords of Admiralty.

Next in rank to the *mirs yam* were *mirs bahr* who were officers of the highest rank to serve on the seas. Two of these were assigned to each single squadron of four war ships.

The programme contained in the *hukmnamah* visualized a naval force of forty ships which were divided into three *katchehris*, viz. the *katchehri* of Jamalabad or Mangalore, the *katchehri* of Wajidabad or Bascoraje and the *katchehri* of Majidabad or Sadashivgarh.

The Board of Admiralty was supplied with a model ship according to which all the vessels were to be built.

Of these 20 were to be line of battle ships and 20 frigates. Of these line of battle ships 3 were to carry 72 guns and the rest 62 guns each. Of the 72 guns 30 were to be twenty-four-pounders, 30 eighteen-pounders, 6 twelve-pounders and 6 nine-pounders. Of the 62 guns, 4 were to be twenty-four-pounders, 24 eighteen-pounders, 24 twelve-pounders and 10 six-pounders.

The number of officers for the fleet fixed in the *hukmnamah* was as follows. There were to be in all 11 *mirs yam* all stationed at the capital and 30 *mirs bahr*, of whom 20 were stationed in ships, 2 in each squadron of ships and 10 were to remain at the capital for imparting instruction. The salary of the *mirs yam* and such *mirs bahr* as attended the court was to be fixed according to their qualifications. The 20 *mirs bahr* serving on the ships, were to receive a monthly salary of 150 *imamis* or rupees.

The land establishment of each *katchehri* was to consist of 3 office superintendents, 3 writers, 12 clerks, (*guma-shtas*), 1 judge (*qadi*), 2-proclaimers (*naqibs*), 11 attendants (*hazirbashis*), 11 literate scouts (*sharbasharan*), 1 chamberlain (*farrash*) who had charge of camp equipment and carpets, 1 torch bearer or link boy (*mash'alchi*) and one camel driver (*sarban*). Their salaries ranged from 20 *rahatis* or *pagodas* in the case of the office superintendents to 2 *rahatis* in the case of the torch bearer.

Each ship of the line was to have 4 *sardars* and 2 *tipdars*. The first *sardar* was to have the overall command. The second *sardar* was placed in charge of the guns and gunners, the powder magazine and everything else appertaining to the guns and provisions. The third *sardar* was in charge of the marines and small arms. The fourth *sardar* was to have particular charge of *khalasis* or sailors and of the artificers. He was expected to superintend the cooking of the food. Any damage caused to the ship during war was to receive his immediate attention.

The complement of each line of battle ship was fixed at 346 men. Thus all the 20 line of the battle ships together were to have an establishment of 6,920. Details were given in the *hukmnamah* of the emoluments to be paid to the different classes of men and ranged from 24 *pagodas* in the case of the first *sardar*, 18 in the case of the second and 15 in the case of third and fourth *sardars* to 3 *pagodas* and 6 *fanams* in the case of blacksmiths, fifiers and trumpeters, and 3 *pagodas* in the case of privates. Apart from the regular salary there was also the institution of subsistence allowance. The total monthly expenses of a line of battle ship while in port came to 1,471 *pagodas* and 5-1/2 *fanams*. Multiplied by 20, for there were to be 20 such ships, the sum comes to 29,431 *pagodas*.

Similar details regarding the establishment of the 20 frigates are given in the *hukmnamah*, the total expenditure on the frigates coming to 16,171 *pagodas*. Thus the total monthly expenditure on a fleet of 40 warships, exclusive of wear and tear, ammunition and stores came to 45,602 *pagodas* or approximately Rs. 1,82,4,000.

When afloat or embarked officers including *mirs yam*, *mirs bahr*, *sardars*, *mirza-i-daftar*, pilots, *darughas* and physician and surgeon were to dine together.

Among the other regulations one related to prayers which were to be said every day, at the five appointed hours. The first officer, or commander was to lead the prayers and deliver the Friday sermon and the *darughas* were made responsible for the five daily calls to prayers.

The *hukmnamah* directs the *mirs yam* to examine carefully the ground in the vicinity of Hafiz-hisar, make a thorough survey of it and elect proper sites and forward the complete plans and drawings to the Sultan. The survey was to include the ascertaining of the exact distance between the two hills and the measurement of the channel or strait formed by them.

Four *kothis* (factories), two at Muscat and two at Kutch, were placed under the *mirs yam* for the purpose

of protection. At each of these factories two *vazaks* (platoons of 12 men) of the regular troops were to be stationed.

The *mirs yam*, *mirs bahr* and *sarishtadars* (keepers of records) were to appear personally before the Sultan annually ten days before the '*Id-ul-Azha*, to deliver an account of receipts and disbursements and to report on the progress of the work in connection with the construction of the ships. Officers of certain other categories were to appear before the Sultan on the eve of the '*Id-ul-Fitr* for the purpose of presenting the accounts and reporting generally on the state of affairs in their departments.

It is a pity the naval programme could not be completed before Tipu Sultan met with his glorious end in 1799. What would have happened if he had had an opportunity of building up his navy before the final war with the British is one of the *ifs* of history on which it is not worth while speculating. But one may here refer to Kirkpatrick's remark on the subject : " It may be contended that in proportion as the Sultan might have been able to realize his alarming plan of a marine establishment we should, as a measure of necessary precaution, have been compelled to augment, at a heavy expense, our naval force in India, for the purpose of duly watching his armament, and keeping them in constant check. The evil was averted by the issue of the war of 1799.¹

In the territories comprising the kingdom of Mysore the traditional system of revenue administration was feudalistic and its affairs were managed through the *poligars* who were hereditary chiefs enjoying considerable powers. They did not only collect rent but also had authority to levy other taxes and control tariff. Some of them had very small demesnes. It has been stated that in some cases a traveller who wanted to cover twenty miles had to pay taxes twice or thrice in the course of his journey². They used to quarrel among themselves

¹ Kirkpatrick, *Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan*, London, 1811, Appendix k, p. I xxviii

² Wilks, quoted in *Saltanat-i-Khudadad*, p. 398.

and thus keep the peace of the country in a state of disturbance. The Mughul Emperor 'Alamgir had taken an effective step to break the influence of this dangerous element ; he took away their old demesnes and gave in return vast uncultivated territories. The idea underlying this measure was to divert their activities from mutual quarrels and revolts against the government and make them concentrate their attention on extending the area of cultivated land. But 'Alamgir's reforms had not been stabilized when the Mughul power began to decline. The *poligars* took advantage of this state of affairs and resumed their old powers and position. When Haidar 'Ali came to power he realized that the *poligars* were a threat to the authority of the ruler. He decided to curb their powers ; but he took action against the bigger *poligars* only. No doubt this gave him some relief but no drastic change was made in the system as a whole. Tipu Sultan had acquired considerable knowledge and experience of revenue affairs because he had been managing the affairs of his own *jagir* which his father had conferred upon him. After his accession one of the earliest important reforms introduced by him was the abolition of the intermediaries. The state took over the demesnes and the cultivators now had to deal direct with the government.

The occupancy rights of the cultivator were hereditary and were not disturbed as long as he kept the land under cultivation and paid the state dues. If the cultivator failed to fulfil these conditions he was deprived of his rights and the land was given to others.¹ Though a beneficial measure this action of Tipu Sultan necessarily created disaffection among the *poligars* many of whom left Mysore. In the Third Mysore War, Col. Read employed these renegades as spies and their agents for supplying provisions.² The abolition of all intermediaries also affected the interests of the Muslim nobility. Instead of receiving *jagirs* for their services to the State

¹ Wilks, *Report on the Interior Administration of Mysore*, Art. 35.

² *Saltanat*, p. 402.

they were now to be paid salaries in cash. In this way they became more dependent on the ruler. The disloyalty of some of the prominent nobles, such as Mir Mu'in-ud-din, Qamar-ud-din Khan and Mir Asaf Sher Khan, was to a certain extent due to these measures. Tipu Sultan suffered heavily for introducing these reforms but they were indispensable for the prosperity of the people in general and the peasantry in particular.

For purposes of the fixation of the State demand Tipu Sultan had divided the land into two classes : those depending on rains only and those irrigated by rivers and tanks. The cultivator's interests were carefully guarded and every effort was made to provide him with facilities. In fixing the State demand the actual produce rather than the area of the land was to be taken as the basis. The state dues were therefore calculated on the crop and collected in cash. If the cultivator and the government officials differed as to the rates of prices the cultivator had the option of paying in kind. For lands having no irrigation facilities the state dues were considerably reduced and concessions granted to their cultivators. " There was no instance ", writes Munro, " in which the Sircar's share was more than one-third. In many it was not one-fifth, or one-sixth, or in some not one-tenth, of the gross produce."¹

Tipu Sultan was anxious to increase the area of land under cultivation and he offered all possible encouragement to achieve this object.² Waste lands were given to the cultivators on very easy terms : no rent was charged in the first year, from the second to the fifth year only one-fourth of the crop was taken, and after that usual conditions were enforced.³ Lands which had been

¹ Gleig, *Munro*, I, pp. 204, 226.

² The dam known as *Krishina Raj Sagara* was originally built by him and given the name *Muhly*, See *Saltanat*, pp. 954-56.

³ *Modern Mysore*, p. 298, quoted by Mahmud Banglari, p. 400.

lying fallow for ten years were revenue-free in the first year ; they paid one-fourth in the second and one-half in the third year. After that they were subjected to the usual rates of assessment. These measures proved to be so effective that the Company's government retained them without any change. The crops that were particularly encouraged were sugar-cane, wheat and barley. Growing of betel leave, betel nut, coco-nut and mangoes was also popularized. Liberal concessions were given to those who cultivated these. Tipu Sultan was not unconscious of the importance of afforestation and is stated to have encouraged it, pine, saul and teak receiving particular attention.

Tipu Sultan's anxiety to keep the peasants happy is indicated by a number of measures taken in that direction. The '*Amils*' had instructions to make annual tours of their respective districts and prepare detailed statements showing the number of villages and the families occupying each village with other details about their conditions and requirements. Those among the peasants who needed help were given *taqavis* or advances and thus saved from the tyrannies of the petty local officers and the money-lenders. The *patels* could not subject the poor cultivator to forced labour, and those who were found guilty were severely dealt with.

Government officials were not allowed to accept diet money ; in fact they could demand nothing over and above the state dues². In case of failure of crops or other factors affecting them adversely Tipu Sultan granted liberal remissions.³ A significant change was made by Tipu Sultan in the process of transmission of revenue to the capital. Previously it was the duty of the *sahukars* or money-lenders to collect government revenue

¹ The *amil* was the head of the revenue administration in the basic unit, in the *paraganah* or *taluka* a *patel* was the village headman.

² Crisp, *Mysore Revenue Regulations*, as quoted by Muhibbul Hasan Khan, p. 342.

³ Malcolm confirms this in these "words; ... the peasantry of his dominions are protected, and their labours encouraged and rewarded." *History of India*, Appendix II, pp. LX-LXI.

and make necessary arrangements for sending it to the capital. Tipu Sultan made this change to reduce the expenses of transmission and save the peasant from the money-lender's exploitation.

Tipu Sultan's income from revenue has been estimated at 68,89,893 *pagodas* or over two crores of rupees. This was reduced to thirty-five to forty-five lakhs after the Treaty of Seringapatam in 1792. To make up the loss the Tipu Sultan had to enhance the assessment by $37\frac{1}{2}\%$ on the produce and excise duty. Obviously this enhancement could not make up the entire loss, but it must have given him considerable relief.

Tipu Sultan's outlook was essentially modern as far as commerce and industry were concerned. Being in close contact with European powers and their activities he could not but be influenced by the idea that international commerce and trade were indispensable for the prosperity of a people. It was for this reason that he took a keen interest in the development of commerce and industry. Buchanan who travelled through Mysore says that Tipu was born with a commercial mind. Like the great trading companies of European nations Tipu Sultan had established his factories and trading agencies in important coastal towns. In Cutch he had two factories—at Mundhi and Mundra. Their staff included seven *darughas* and a hundred and fifty *sepoys*. Another important factory was established at Muscat. The main commodities taken from here to Mysore were saffron, silk-worms, horses, pearls, sulphur, copper and dry fruits : among the articles exported sandal-wood, ivory, paper, cloth and rice may be particularly mentioned. It appears that Tipu Sultan's relations with the Imam of Muscat were very cordial because the merchants coming from there were allowed on their articles a concession of 4% in duty. The leniency of Tipu Sultan was however abused by these people. He had forbidden the sale of rice to the English and Portuguese merchants ; but they used to send their agents in the guise of Muscat merchants. When Tipu Sultan

came to know of this he directed that rice should be sold to those merchants only who could produce a certificate from his factory at Muscat. Besides these there were other factories at Jeddah and Ormuz. He had also sent ambassadors to France, Turkey and Iran for establishing trade relations with these countries. Similarly in the East Mysore had trade relations with China and Burma. It is stated that the Chinese merchants used to avoid Mysore because of pirates. Tipu Sultan therefore ordered that Chinese vessels were to travel under the protection of his convoys. In addition to giving every encouragement to private initiative Tipu Sultan created a State trade monopoly in certain commodities. These were precious metals, gold ores, elephants, pepper, tobacco, sandal and teak wood. He also abolished private banking and exchange and remittances to foreign countries were taken over by the State. He issued detailed regulations for the departments and officials entrusted with commerce and trade. He established thirty factories in his kingdom and seventeen in foreign countries.

The development of trade would not have been possible without industrial development marching side by side. Tipu Sultan realized this and paid adequate attention to industry. Before his time Mysore was mainly an agricultural country. He not only extended agriculture but introduced and developed a number of industries which changed the entire economy of the State. Silk industry may be especially mentioned. Tipu Sultan obtained mulberry from China and also from Bengal and introduced it in his State. The result was that Mysore became one of the important silk-producing areas in the sub continent. His *Lal-Bagh* was in fact a nursery for experiments in rearing foreign plants and introducing them in his State. Even a year after Tipu Sultan's death Buchanan found it in a flourishing condition.¹

It would not be out of place here to mention the department known as *amrit-mahal*. It was created by Haidar

¹ Quoted in *Modern Mysore*, p. 280.

'Ali with the object of improving the breeds of cattle and horses. Tipu Sultan not only maintained it but added to its efficiency and size. The bullocks and the mules bred under the supervision of the *amrit-mahal* became famous as beasts of burden. Haidar 'Ali's well known march to Chidambran when he could cover a hundred miles in two days only, and Tipu Sultan's victory over General Medows, when he could do 63 miles in as much time were mainly due to the efficiency and speed of their beasts of burden.

Tipu Sultan realized the importance of the industrial development and in spite of the handicaps from which he suffered and his preoccupation with military affairs he took steps to improve and develop local industries. He employed for this purpose French artisans, sent to him by Louis XVI, the English prisoners of war and other European adventurers. He also made a request to the Ottoman Sultan to send skilled craftsmen to help him in the implementation of his schemes of industrial development. These workmen were employed in the factories which he had established in the towns of Seringapatam, Chitaldrug, Bangalore and Bednur. Besides guns, muskets and other arms they manufactured cutlery, knives, scissors and watches. The fort of Seringapatam had a big paper-mill. Gold-plated paper of high quality was also manufactured. It has been asserted that gun powder, prepared in Mysore compared favourably with that produced in England. Great improvement was effected in the quality of sugar. This was achieved with the help of the Chinese who had been specially brought for the purpose. Bangalore was famous for its textiles. Besides silk, muslin and chintz became famous for their excellence.

Among the cottage industries pottery, wood-work, ivory and carpet-making were encouraged. Chinapatan was known for its glass-ware. For a detailed account of the various articles produced in different parts of the State the reader can peruse the passages of the

narrative of Buchanan who was entrusted with the duty of making an economic survey of Mysore only a few months after its acquisition by the Company.

Tipu Sultan's versatile genius has left its traces on every phase of his policy and administration. Coinage and currency are no exception. Soon after the end of the Second Mysore War he directed his attention to improvements in this sphere. The minting of coins must have been affected by the pressure of war, and therefore it was necessary to introduce the needed reforms. It appears that in the first year of his accession coins were issued by two mints only—Seringapatam and Bednur. Four years later the number of mints seems to have gone up to twelve¹. In respect of the beauty of his coins the following testimony of a specialist is worth quoting : " Many of the gold and silver pieces afford indisputable testimony to the decorative value of the Arabic script, and it may be doubted if any coin more attractive in this respect than Tipu's double rupee has ever been struck in India."² It would be of some interest to refer to a few prominent features of Tipu Sultan's coins. Against the usual practice of the monarchs he did not mention his name or titles on the coins, nor those of the Mughul Emperor. Instead H the initial letter of his father's name is inscribed.

The half-*mohur* (gold) was named *siddiqi* after Caliph Abu Bakr, and the quarter *mohur*, *faruqi* after Caliph 'Umar. The smallest gold coin was called *fanam*. The biggest silver coin was called *haidari* after Caliph 'Ali and the biggest copper coin was known as *Usmani* after the third Caliph's name. The names of other small coins were after the *Imams*, such as '*abidi*, *jafari*, *kazimi*.

Subsequently, to some of the copper coins were given the names of planets, such as *mushtari*, *zahra* and *bahram*. The small copper coin, quarter-*paisa* weighing 42 grams

¹ The twelve mints were located at the following places; Seringapatam, Bednur, Gooty, Bangalore, Chitaldrug, Calicut, Satyamangalam, Dindigul, Gurram-Konda, Darwar, Mysore and Ferokh.

² Handerson, *The Coins of Haidar 'Ali and Tipu Sultan* (Madras, 1921), p. VII.

was called *akhtar*. It may be added that the only figure appearing on some of his coins is that of an elephant.

Tipu Sultan introduced a new calendar primarily to meet the administrative difficulty experienced in the collection of agricultural taxes in accordance with the Hijri calendar based upon the lunar year.

The reforms introduced by him in the prevalent Muslim calendar consisted of the following:—

He reckoned the Muslim era not from the *hijrat* occurring in 622 but from the advent of Islam in 609 A.C. He chose to call this era “ *Maulud-i-Muhammad* ”, the era reckoned from the birth of Muhammad. Actually, however, his era begins not with the birth of the Prophet but with the proclamation of prophethood by Muhammad. In other words, his era starts thirteen years earlier than the Hijra era.

Another measure adopted by Tipu Sultan in connection with the calendar was the adoption of the Hindu months and the sixty-year cycle known to the Hindus as *Brihispati Chakra*. He, however, gave new names to the various Hindu months. Similarly each year in the 60 year cycle was given a distinct name.¹ In designating

¹ The names adopted for the months according to the *Abjad* and *Abtas* systems were :

Abjad : Ahmadi ; Bahari ; Ja'fari ; Darai ; Hashimi ; Wasiti ; Zabar-jadi ; Haidari ; Tului ; Yusufi ; Yazidi ; Bayasi.

Abtas : Ahmadi ; Bahari ; Taqi ; Samari ; Ja'fari ; Haidari ; Khus-rawi ; Dini ; Zakiri ; Rahmani ; Razi ; Rabbani.

The names given to each year in the 60 year cycle were as follows:—

Abjad; Ahad; Ahmad; Ab; Aba; Bab; Baj; Abad; Abaad; Jah; Awj; Haj; Jahd; Jihad; Wajid; Yad; Zuhd; Jawza; Hai; Wahid; Buduh; Tayyib; Tayib; Yuz; Kad; Hawi Kabad; Agah; Wahid; Wahi; Kai; Kaya; Kabud; Ibl; Dil; Dal; Gibal; Zaki; Azal; Jalu; or Jilau; Dalw; Ma; Kabak; Jam; Jaam; Adam; Wali; Waali; Kawkab; Kawakih; Yam; Dawam; Hamd; Hamid; Jan; Adan; Huma; Majid; Kuhl; Jahan; Mujiz;

Abtas; Ahad; Ahmad; Ab; Aba; Bab; Tab; Tabr; Baj; Taj; Thabit; Abad; Abaad; Bar; Hajib; Jar; Riya; Hur; Dur; Dar; Rahat, Barid; Charkh ; Kharaj ; Taz ; Khirad ; Badr Tab ; Dar Taj ; Dadar , Zad Zar ; Zaar ; Bazr ; Zarab ; Sata ; Zartab ; Rabtaz; Sakh; Sakha; Daraz; Dasa; Sha; Sara ; Sarab ; Shata; Zarband; Sihir ; Shihir; Rasikh ; Shad ; Hirasat ; Sez , Shadab ; Barish; Rastar; Bashtra; Bisharat ; Shahrh ; Rushd ; Sabah ; Irshad.

the months and years, he made use of the *abjad* and *abtas* systems of evaluating every letter of the alphabet in terms of numbers. The *abjad* system which follows the ancient order of the alphabet had been quite common throughout the Muslim world for several centuries. In addition to this, however, Tipu Sultan employed the system of valuation known as *abtas* in which the order of letters is the one that exists in the Arabic script. He also called it *hisab-i-zar*.

Tipu Sultan also adopted the system of intercalary months. There was, however, a little difference between his system and the traditional Hindu system. Whereas these months were added by the Hindus towards the end of the year, Tipu Sultan added them in the beginning.

Tipu Sultan tried another innovation. Like the Arabic script which is written from right to left, Tipu Sultan wrote figures also in this manner. Thus he wrote 54 as 45, 132 as 231, and 1217 and 7121.

Even this brief survey of Tipu Sultan's career might have given an indication to the reader why the English considered him as their most formidable opponent who had to be destroyed. It was not merely his hostility to the English, but his ability, efficiency and incorruptibility which constituted a thorn in their side. He was considered as " unquestionably the most powerful of all the native princes of Hindoostan"¹ His organisation of the army on modern lines, his creation of a sizeable navy, the establishment of armaments factories, his encouragement of industry and international trade, his introduction of land reforms leading to the contentment of the peasantry which made his dominions " the best cultivated and its population the most flourishing in India",² his recognition of ability rather than family connection in making appointments, so unusual in the

¹ Rennell, *Memoirs*, pn. CXXXVIII-IX.

² Mill, VI, p. 105.

eighteenth century India, his establishment of a well-ordered, compact State unlike the loose organization of the Marathas and the inefficient government of the Nizam, and, in general, the enlightened outlook of Tipu Sultan, it was these that made a conflict with him inevitable in the eyes of the English.¹ Add to these his passionate love for the country of his birth, his devotion to Islam and his hatred of foreign rule and the prolonged and bitter conflict between him and the English explains itself.

In the long course of Muslim struggle for freedom in this sub continent, extending well over two centuries, Tipu Sultan figures as one of the most outstanding leaders. By offering resistance to Britain in the most determined fashion and sacrificing his life in the cause of freedom he became a great source of inspiration for the subsequent generations. He is stated to have uttered these memorable words shortly before his death : "To live for a day like a lion is far better than a hundred year's life of a jackal ". And it was no empty boast. For he had the choice of joining Wellesley's system of subsidiary alliances, as other contemporary princes had done, and thus ensuring the continuance of his rule. But he was not prepared to play such an ignoble role in history.

Tipu Sultan had a special liking for the lion because it was a symbol of valour and bravery. He had kept many lions in his palace. The colour of the lion was his favourite colour. It was preferred for uniforms and clothes. Even some of the buildings erected by him bore that hue.. Among the eminent companions of the Prophet, the character of Hazrat Ali made a special appeal to him because he was the model of heroism to be followed by a *mujahid*. He had the words "*Asadullah-ul-Ghalib*," the title of Hazrat Ali, inscribed on his weapons of war. This was in harmony with his consuming passion for *Jihad*. How great was its importance in his

¹ In support of this contention one may cite Thomas Munro who fought in the wars against Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan and later became Governor of Madras, see *Gleig, Life of Munro*, Vol. I.

eyes is indicated by his Army Manual, the *Fath-al-Mujahidin*, and the collection of the Friday sermons called *Muatiyyad-al-Mujahidin*. In the first chapter of *Fath* which deals with religious matters and treats of some of the fundamental doctrines of Islam, *Jihad* against the aggressive disbelievers for the triumph of the Faith is described as real Islam¹. In another place he exhorts the Muslims not to submit to disbelievers as long as it was in their power to resist.²

An examination of Tipu Sultan's activities throughout the eighteen years of his eventful reign proves beyond doubt that he practised what he preached. His attitude towards the East India Company was the central factor in his policy. It was apparent to Tipu Sultan that there was no chance of the Mughul Empire recovering its lost authority as the sovereign power. The process of disintegration which had begun early in the eighteenth century had resulted in the break-up of the Empire into scores of virtually independent States. Even in the Deccan there were three large States besides the territories of the East India Company, viz., the Marathas, the Nizam and Mysore. Tipu Sultan's efforts were directed towards the establishment of a united front by these three Powers. If the Marathas and the Nizam had joined hands with Mysore the three together would have proved quite formidable a combination for the British. But neither the Nizam nor the Maratha statesmen had the political insight to see from which quarter came the real danger to the independence of the Indian peoples. The last two decades of the eighteenth century were a period of great difficulties and reverses for England. America had already been lost to them and the happenings in France in the wake of the Revolution of 1789 foreboded a grim crisis in their affairs. Tipu Sultan's contacts with the French and other foreign Powers had kept him informed

¹ *Fath-al-Mujahidin*, ed. by Mahmud Husain, p. 18.

² *Ethe, Catalogue of Persian MSS in the India Office Library*, Vol. I., p. 1415; also *Tipu Sultan and the Friday Sermon* by Mahmud Husain in the *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. III, Part IV.

of these developments in the West. Nearer home it was not difficult to see what the English were aiming at. The aggressions of Clive and Warren Hastings were still fresh in the memories of his generation, and if there could have been any doubts as to the intentions of the Company these were removed by Wellesley's policy of naked imperialism. A shrewd statesman like Tipu Sultan could easily realize that if the people of the sub continent were to be saved from foreign rule, a determined effort must be made to expel the British. To achieve this end no sacrifice was too great. Mysore must persuade the other Indian states to make common cause against the East India Company. If they agreed, the task would be comparatively easy ; but even if they did not, the fight must, nevertheless, be carried on. Tipu Sultan also made a bid to win allies outside the sub continent.¹ This was something unusual, for the importance of international alliances had not been fully grasped in the sub continent. Tipu Sultan saw the obvious advantage of establishing close relations with foreign Powers.

In his foreign policy he followed two distinct courses of action although both moved towards the same objective. He was anxious to enter into an alliance with France, the most determined adversary of the British in Europe and he also wanted to have friendly ties with Muslim Powers such as Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan. If friendly relations could have been established with these Powers, it would have strengthened Tipu Sultan's position against the English; besides this natural desire he was also motivated by the ideal of Muslim unity. Tipu Sultan's efforts, however, proved in vain. The world of Islam was at this time in a state of degeneration and neither the governments nor the peoples of Muslim countries

¹ "The Indian rulers were totally blind to the realities of the situation, they were too interested in securing immediate gains to think of the ultimate effects of their policy It is only when this back-ground is clearly visualised that the reasons why Tipu sought the alliance of the French, and sent embassies to France and Turkey can be properly appreciated". M. H. Khan, *History of Tipu Sultan*, p. 378.

were in a position to follow an independent course in their foreign policy.

The Ottoman Empire, now a victim of the aggression from Russia, and other imperialistic Powers of Europe, looked to Britain for help. It was therefore out of the question for the Turkish Sultan to enter into an alliance with Tipu Sultan against the East India Company. Tipu Sultan sent his embassy to Istanbul in 1784 under the leadership of Ghulam Ali. He was keen on entering into an alliance of perpetual friendship with the Ottoman Empire. The latter was to send troops to help Mysore; these were to return whenever Tipu Sultan would so desire. The two governments were to exchange technicians and skilled workmen. Lastly, Mysore was to be given facilities in the port of Basra in return for a similar concession to Ottoman ships in the ports of Tipu Sultan's dominions. Obviously the Sultan wanted to bring the two States closer to each other and establish political and commercial relations between them. Unfortunately, however, the embassy reached Istanbul at a time which was highly unfavourable for its objects. Russia's aggressive designs on her had forced Turkey to declare war (Aug. 1787). In February 1788 Austria had also joined Russia. France being involved in domestic troubles, England was the only power Turkey could look to for help or mediation. It is, therefore, not surprising that nothing came out of Tipu Sultan's efforts beyond an exchange of courtesies and gifts. Later Sultan Salim addressed a letter to Tipu Sultan which was sent to him by Wellesely with a covering letter. The Ottoman Sultan had advised the ruler of Mysore to refrain from entertaining hostilities towards the English because, according to him, the French rather than the English were the enemies of Islam and therefore his efforts ought to be directed against them. Tipu Sultan was grievously disappointed at this attitude and wrote back to the Caliph that he had decided to carry on *jihad* by himself; he conceded that the French were as faithless and hard-hearted as depicted in the communication but that he had to

direct his *jihad* for the time being against the English who had launched an attack on his territories.

Equally unfortunate was the failure of his efforts to enter into alliances with Persia and Afghanistan. The Persian monarch seems to have had an inclination towards entering into friendly relations with Mysore, but Wellesely's diplomacy succeeded in creating a rift between Persia and Afghanistan with the result that Tipu Sultan's project for alliances fell through. In fact Zaman Shah of Afghanistan had reacted favourably to the proposals of Tipu Sultan in regard to an alliance of Muslim States, and had actually marched in the direction of India. But it was just at this juncture that he learnt of the Persian invasion of his dominions which forced him to withdraw his forces. A year later Tipu Sultan was no more.

Tipu Sultan's consuming passion for liberating his country from English rule led him to enter into an alliance with the French, a Christian power. It is a pity that in the earlier stages the government of France failed to appreciate the real significance of an alliance with Mysore against the increasing power of the British in India, and by the time Napoleon came to establish his authority in France the position of Tipu Sultan had been considerably weakened. At this stage the French offer of co-operation was not only ineffective but paved the way for the downfall of Tipu Sultan. At any rate this was the pretext for Wellesley to force a war on Tipu Sultan. On November 8, 1798 Wellesley wrote to Tipu Sultan : "It is impossible that you should suppose me to be ignorant of the intercourse which subsists between you and the French, whom you know to be inveterate enemies of the Company, and to be now engaged in an unjust war with the British nation. You cannot imagine me to be indifferent to the transactions which have passed between you and the enemies of my country."¹

Tipu Sultan's failure to bring about an alliance of the leading Muslim Powers of the day or to transform his friendly relations with the French into an effective military

¹ *Wellesley's Despatches*, I, 327 (Quoted by M. H. Khan, p. 301).

pact was a tragedy, a tragedy for him for he lost his all and a tragedy for the sub continent for his defeat meant the end of the first round of the struggle for freedom.

It has lately become the fashion for the admirers of Tipu Sultan to regard the conduct of Tipu Sultan's treacherous ministers and disloyal courtiers as the real cause of his failure. That there was treachery in his camp is undeniable. It is equally true that the confidence Tipu Sultan reposed in his subordinates was so unflinching that it might even be termed a weakness in the character of a ruler. But the real cause of Tipu Sultan's defeat was that the forces ranged against him proved too strong for him. The Industrial Revolution had changed the face of Britain ; it had given her new strength and conferred on her the leadership of the world, thus enabling her to defeat Napoleon. In India the Company with whom Tipu Sultan was at war was a very different proposition from what it had been in the past. The Regulating Act of 1773 had given a new cohesion to the policy and effort of the English in India. And when Cornwallis came as governor-general in 1786, he was armed with much larger powers than any of his predecessors. Not only were the offices of the governor-general and commander-in-chief united in his person but he was empowered to override the majority of his council. It was this centralized power joined by the Marathas and the Nizam against whom Tipu Sultan fought single-handed and failed.

The value and greatness of Tipu Sultan's achievement, however, should not be measured by his ultimate defeat at the hands of the English. His real greatness lies in his unflinching determination to carry his mission to its logical end. He knew that he was fighting against heavy odds and that the chances of victory against the combined forces of the British, the Nizam and the Marathas were by no means bright. None of these considerations, however, shook his determination. In laying down his life for a great cause Tipu Sultan made himself immortal,

CHAPTER XVI

SHAH WALIULLAH (I)

Life and Achievements in the Religious Sphere

'Alamgir the last important Muslim Emperor of the sub continent died in 1707. Even for some years before his death, serious weaknesses in the national character were becoming manifest. The Emperor himself was probably the most industrious, conscientious and disciplined Muslim monarch to sit on the throne of Delhi, but years of comfort and luxury had so sapped the moral fibre of the Mughul aristocracy and their military organization had become so unwieldy and ineffective that after continuous and personally directed campaigns of a quarter of century 'Alamgir was unable to deal decisively with the problem of the ill-equipped Marathas. After his death disintegration set in rapidly. Within twelve years of 'Alamgir's death the Marathas had obtained the right to enforce *chauth* in the Deccan, and soon most of the provincial governors were independent and warring with one another. In 1739, Nadir Shah's sack of Delhi demonstrated to the whole world the utter helplessness of the Mughul Emperor.

Political disintegration was mostly the result of spiritual confusion. The last years of Shah Jahan's reign were marked by the beginning of an ideological conflict, of which two representatives were 'Alamgir and his brother, Dara Shukoh. This conflict was symbolic of a cleavage within the soul of Muslim India. Islam in India was largely the gift of the *sufis*, who were occasionally unorthodox and were, at any rate, more concerned with inner spiritual experience than with the observance of outward practices enjoined by the Shar'. These tendencies found a congenial soil in the minds of the

converts from Hinduism and their continuance was facilitated by the fact that no sustained efforts at educating the converts in tenets and principles of Islam seem to have been made. These tendencies resulted in the strengthening of the forces of heterodoxy, which found keen supporters among the non-Muslims and the minority sects of Islam itself. On the other hand there were always some Muslims, at least amongst the immigrants from "Islamic countries", who were well-versed in Islamic lore. With the consolidation of Muslim rule, the facilities for importing Islamic education increased and the number and influence of those who laid great store by orthodoxy and strict observances of Islamic principles grew considerably. The orthodox reaction led by Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind naturally strengthened this tendency. Thus there was a continuous conflict between heterodoxy and the strict orthodoxy of the revivalists, of which we get a glimpse in the lives of these two sons of Shah Jahan.

A new source of conflict had earlier been added, when Humayun's visit to Iran was followed by a steady stream of poets, scholars and men of affairs from that country. They were almost all Shi'ahs, while Indian Islam was predominantly Sunni; a study of the contemporary literature will show how repugnant their beliefs were to the orthodox circles. The Shi'ahs, however, included many men of ability and position and their influence was out of all proportion to their numbers. If Muslim India was to have a harmonious religious life, the problems of Shi'ah-Sunni tension had to be solved on a satisfactory basis.

Yet another source of weakness lay in the fact that even at this stage knowledge of Islam was not really widespread. Since the literary language of the period was Persian, many Muslim countries were not thoroughly conversant with the contents of the Holy Book. No true understanding of Islam was possible without an intelligent study of the *Qur'an* and this could be achieved either by making everybody a scholar of Arabic—a task

well-high impossible or at any rate never attempted—or through preparing and making current a Persian version of the Holy Book. This also had not been done so far.

In the eighteenth century Islam in the Indo-Pakistan sub continent was faced with such menacing problems that it was feared that political disintegration would be followed by religious collapse. That this did not happen and in fact an era of reintegration and intense religious activity was inaugurated was due, more than anything else, to the activities of one man—Shah Waliullah.

He was born in 1703—four years before the death of 'Alamgir. His father, Shah 'Abdur Rahim was a *sufi* and a scholar, and for a short time assisted in the compilation of the voluminous code of Islamic Law prepared at the court of 'Alamgir—*Fatawa-i-'Alamgiri*. He was, however, not enamoured of the atmosphere of the court and is said to have refused an invitation to visit 'Alamgir. He devoted his energies mainly to teaching at *Madrasah-i-Rahimiyah*, a college which he had established and which played an important part in the religious history of Muslim India. About the synthetic line taken by him and his brother, Maulana 'Ubaid-ullah Sindhi has written :

“ The essence of the teachings of the two brothers was the effort to discover a path, which could be transversed together by the Muslim philosophers (the *sufi* and the *mutakallim*) and the Muslim jurists (*faqih*).”

Shah Waliullah received his academic and spiritual education at the hands of his father and was in his teens when he started teaching in his father's *madrasah*. He continued this for twelve years, after which, already ripe in years and rich in learning, he left for Arabia for higher studies and to perform the *Hajj*. He was in Arabia for nearly fourteen months and prosecuted his studies under the best known teachers of Mecca and Medina. His favourite teacher was Shaikh Abu Tahir bin Ibrahim of Medina, from whom he obtained his *sanad* (degree) in *Hadis*. Shaikh Abu Tahir seems

to have been a man of encyclopædic learning and broad catholic tastes. Shah Waliullah wrote about him :

“ In short he was gifted with the virtues of the godly path, like piety, independence of judgement, devotion, attachment to knowledge, and fairness in controversy. Even in minor matters of doubt he would not offer any opinion until he had pondered deeply and checked up all references.”

We have quoted Maulana ‘Ubaidullah Sindhi about the effort of Shah Waliullah’s father and uncle to reconcile conflicting views. Shaikh Abu Tahir appears to have had the same approach to problems and the same comprehensive view of things. Shah Waliullah wrote about him : “ During the study of the well-known collection of the traditions of the Holy Prophet made by Imam Bukhari, there was a talk of discrepancies between traditions and *fiqh*. Shaikh Abu Tahir observed that this was due to the fact that the personality of the Holy Prophet was a comprehensive one and with this comprehensiveness it was possible to reconcile what superficially appeared incompatible.”

During his stay at Mecca Shah Waliullah saw a vision in which the Holy Prophet blessed him with the good tidings that he would be instrumental in the organisation of a section of the Muslim community. These were the days of political turmoil in India, where life and property were unsafe. Shah Waliullah was advised by his relatives to settle down in the Hijaz, but he knew that the proper field for his activities was his native country, hence he did not accept this counsel of despair. He returned to Delhi on 9 July, 1732, and on a planned and systematic basis set himself to work. Prior to his departure for Arabia Shah Waliullah’s main occupation was teaching. Now he changed his method of work. He trained pupils in different branches of Islamic knowledge and entrusted them with the teaching of students. He devoted himself largely to writing and before his death in 1762 had completed a library of standard works in

all branches of 'Islamic Sciences'—of the type particularly suited to local conditions.

Shah Waliullah's life was that of a true scholar, and singularly disciplined. He was moderate and regular in habits, and as his son, Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz writes, "was rarely ill". "Once he sat down to work after *ishraq* he would not change his posture till midday". He had kept before himself a high mission, but he differed from many other leading figures of Islam inasmuch as this mission did not include any claim or ambition for himself. A major difficulty even with great and sincere religious leaders in Indian Islam has been that while aiming at the revival of Islam they have made their own claims a part of their teachings. It is characteristic of Shah Waliullah that he resisted these temptations.

Not only did Shah Waliullah abstain from setting up as a *mujaddid* or the founder of a new spiritual order, but he also exercised similar self-restraint in another sphere. He was fated to live in troubled times, when Muslim political power was breaking up. He could not see except with deep anguish what was happening around him, but he did not enter active politics. He felt that these things could be set right, if at all, only by men like Nizam-ul-Mulk, Najib-ud-Daulah and Ahmad Shah Abdali. He repeatedly wrote to the leading dignitaries of the day and urged them to do their duty, but he confined his own active efforts to the task for which he was best suited. In fact on the role of the '*ulama*' in politics he had very definite views and believed in a division of work, which till recently has characterised the normal course of Muslim history in India. He drew a clear distinction between the succession to the Holy prophet in worldly matters (*khilafat-i-zahiri*) and spiritual affairs (*khilafat-i-batini*). He wrote in this connection :

"In the life of the Holy Prophet there is a noble model for all his followers. For those who are his successors in affairs of the state, there are duties like the

enforcement of the Islamic Law ; making arrangements for *jihad* ; the fortification and security of frontiers ; granting gifts ; sending embassies ; the recovery and allocation of *sadaqat*, taxes and revenues ; the adjudication of disputes ; the protection of orphans ; the supervision of *wayf* properties of Muslims ; construction of roads, mosques and other buildings, and similar affairs. Those who are engaged in these services and occupations are successors to the Holy Prophet in worldly affairs.

“ The successors in spiritual affairs and those entrusted with the teaching of the Islamic Law, the *Holy Qur'an* and the Traditions, or with enjoining what is lawful and forbidding ; those whose words strengthen the true religion, either through controversies and discussions, as was done by the *mutakallamin*, or through preaching and advice as is done by Muslim preachers ; those who through their company and spiritual guidance and training serve Islam and Muslims as is the case with the *sufi* saints ; or those who arrange for prayers or pilgrimages or guide the people towards piety. These we call, the spiritual successors of the Holy Prophet.”

We have alluded to the conflict between orthodox Islam and heterodoxy, symbolised in the days of Shah Jahan by his sons, 'Alamgir and Dara, and there is no doubt, that this conflict was widespread. This conflict had created some aversion to *sufism* ; the orthodox revival under *Mujaddid-i-alf-i-sani* had only intensified that feeling, which was to reach its climax with the advent in India of extreme puritanism. Here as elsewhere, the role of Shah Waliullah was that of reform, reconciliation and retention of all that was useful or even unobjectionable in the national tradition.

Shah Waliullah was born in an atmosphere deeply imbued with *sufism*. His father and uncle were well-known *sufis* and are mentioned in contemporary histories amongst *sufis* rather than '*ulama*. Later Shah Waliullah became an admirer of Ibn-i-Taimiyah and came under the influence of those teachers at Medina, some of whom might have known and taught the founder

of Wahhabism. They provided a useful check of on Shah Waliullah's predilection towards *sufism*, but while, now, he placed greater emphasis on the reform of *sufism*, unlike the Wahhabis he did not totally reject it. In fact he found in it a solution of many individual problems and a source of moral and spiritual strength. Perhaps the Indian atmosphere had something to do with it. Shah Waliullah must have seen that not only was Islam in India the gift of the *sufis*, but that our entire religious history, our literature and our philosophy were closely intermingled with it. Besides, the truly Islamic form of *sufism* enjoining spiritual self-discipline would always be useful to the individual, particularly in an atmosphere where orthodoxy sometimes tended to emphasise only the external side of conduct.

Shah Waliullah was strongly critical of the decadent and popular forms of *tasawwuf* current in his days. In his *Wasiyat Namah* (will) which epitomises all his teachings, "And the next advice (*wasiyat*) is that one should not entrust one's affairs to and become a disciple of the saints of this period who are given to a number of irregularities." He not only criticised the gross superstitions and tall claims of some popular representatives of *sufism*, but also saw fully the danger to the community from an exaggerated attention to spiritual matters and to self-negation. "In short, excess in matters of *insilakh* is unsuitable in that it is a grave malady for the Muslim community. May God bless everyone who tries to cure it."

Shah Waliullah urged reform and discipline of *tasawwuf*, but did not oppose it. In fact he was deeply interested in the subject and wrote a number of books outlining the practices of various *sufi* orders and analysing *sufi* mysteries. A typical composition is a short pamphlet entitled, *Faisla-i-Wahdat-ul-Wujud wa-Wahdat-ul-Shuhud* (verdict on *wahdat-ul-shuhud* and *wahdat-ul-wujud*), in which he had tried to reconcile with the views of Ibn-ur-'Arabi the *Mujaddid's* theory

of *wahdat-ul-shuhud* which was really an attempt to give a philosophical and sufistic basis to Islamic orthodoxy.

About Shah Waliullah's work on *tasawwaf* Maulana Manazir Ahsan writes, "With these books the disputes between the *sufis* and the '*ulama*, provided one is just, come to an end. By giving an Islamic interpretation to the *sufi* doctrines, Shah Waliullah removed the distaste which the '*ulama* had felt for *sufism* and the *sufis*." It was due to the adoption of Shah Waliullah's point of view that in the great religious seminary of Deoband, where the principles laid down by Shah Waliullah have been followed, there is a considerable emphasis on the spiritual discipline of the advanced students on more or less *sufic* lines, and patrons of the seminary, like Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi and Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi were practising *sufis*. Not only did Shah Waliullah attempt to bridge the gulf between the *sufis* and the theologians, but he also attempted to harmonise the internal differences among the *sufis*. Four *sufi* orders—Chishtis, Suhrawardis, Qadris and Naqshbandis have gained importance in India. Normally when a spiritual guide accepts a new disciple, he initiates him only in one or other of these orders. Shah Waliullah had been at various stages initiated into all these four orders and he started the practices of reading out the names of leading saints of all the four *sufi* orders and initiating the novice in all of them simultaneously. This practice has also been adopted at Deoband and not only encourages the novice to adopt the useful features of all orders, but also strikes at the root of rivalry between different orders.

Another controversy, which occasionally led to violence in the eighteenth century concerned Shi'ah-Sunni differences. Indian Islam, particularly in the north, had always been predominantly Sunni but after the adoption of Shi'ism as the state religion in Safawid Iran and the immigration of a large numbers of Irani scholars and statesmen into India, Shi'ah doctrines

began to gain ground here as well. Many Shi'ahs occupied key positions in the Mughul government. Akbar's tutor, Bairam Khan, Jahangir's all powerful wife, Nur Jahan, her brother, prime minister Asaf Khan and several founders of provincial principalities in the eighteenth century were Shi'ahs. In the present conditions of India and Pakistan this would not and should not attract any attention, but in those days there was considerable tension between the two sects. Its political expression was the conflict between the Turani and Irani parties of the Mughul aristocracy. It sometimes resulted in rioting and bloodshed. Mirza Mazhar Janjanaan, one of the most celebrated contemporaries of Shah Waliullah and a poet, a scholar and a saint, was assassinated by a Shi'ah on account of religious animosity, and such cases were not rare. It was at this juncture that Shah Waliullah took this problem in hand, wrote bulky volumes on the issues dividing the Shi'ahs and the Sunnis and laid down lines of approach best calculated to remove the sectarian differences and to assist in the building of a common, harmonious nationhood. In the peculiar conditions of Muslim India, the problem could not be viewed in the same light in which it was seen in the strongholds of Sunni orthodoxy like Transoxiana, Turkey or Najd. The first step was that Shah Waliullah removed the prevalent conception that the Shia'hs were not Muslims. The policy of sectarian tolerance urged by Shah Waliullah has been so generally adopted that today this appears to be axiomatic. This attitude was however not popular in those days and the reaction which it created in some orthodox circles may be judged by an incident narrated by Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz. He says that somebody asked his father, Shah Waliullah, the legal position about treating Shi'ahs as unbelievers. Shah Waliullah pointed out the wide divergence of views amongst Hanafi lawyers on this subject and did not express himself in favour of treating them as unbelievers. This inquirer repeated his question, and got the same reply. "I heard

that he went about saying that my father was a Shi'ah."

Not only was Shah Waliullah opposed to considering Shi'ahs as unbelievers, but he was also not behind any reasonable Shi'ahs in acknowledging the greatness and moral eminence of Caliph 'Ali.

Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani says about the services of Shah Waliullah in this respect :

" To India came the Turani Sunnis, Irani Shi'ahs and last of all the fanatical Sunni Rohillas, and the mingling of these elements created great complications with regard to the Shi'ah-Sunni question. Shah Waliullah rendered a great service in this connection also. After great labour and the study of thousands and thousands of pages, he gave in *Izalatul Khifa* an accurate account of the first four caliphs of Islam in such a way that after the study of the book not only are the misunderstandings of the Shi'ahs removed but the fanaticism of the extremist Sunnis is also reduced. Instead of following a path of controversy and strife the Shah Sahib adopted a course which has stopped much mischief."

A task to which Shah Waliullah set himself early in life was the diffusion of the knowledge of the *Qur'an*. His most memorable contribution in this field was his translation of the *Qur'an*, which he completed within five years of his return from Arabia. A biographer has recorded that this bold step so enraged some contemporary *maulawis*, that they and their followers surrounded Shah Waliullah's *madrassah* with drawn swords and for some time his life was in danger. Even if this story were incorrect—and the general esteem in which Shah Waliullah was held in all religious circles on account of his profound learning, piety and sanity of views must have blunted the edge of opposition in everything he did—the revolutionary nature of the step taken by him must be obvious to everybody acquainted with Muslim history. In the entire history of Islam except, perhaps, for a translation made by the Berber

leader, Ibn Tumarth, in order to discourage the use of Arabic, there was no previous instance of a translation of the *Qur'an* being made by a Muslim in a foreign language and its having gained currency and acceptance. To an average Muslim the *Qur'an* is the very word of God, and to retain its sanctity it must be studied in the original Arabic. The complexity of the problem may be judged by the fact that when in 1928, the celebrated Muslim convert, Marmaduke Pickthal, undertook a new English translation of the *Qur'an*, and wished to consult the 'ulama of Al-Azhar, they gave a *fatwa* declaring that "the translator and all who read the translation or abetted it or showed approval of it were condemned to everlasting perdition."¹

Shah Waliullah faced this problem two centuries earlier. He was not only able to give what has been considered the most satisfactory rendering of the Holy Book, but paved the way for others. His translation was in Persian, which was the literary language of Muslim India. In less than half a century his two sons produced two separate renderings into Urdu, which was beginning to gain currency and was more intelligible to the common people.

The effect of these renderings on the spiritual and religious life of the people is not difficult to see. Perhaps it is correct to say that outside Arabic speaking countries, nowhere is the *Qur'an* studied with so much comprehension as in the Indo-Pakistan sub continent, and this has been essentially due to the lead given by Shah Waliullah.

Shah Waliullah would have occupied a high place in the religious history of Muslim India if he had done nothing besides being the first translator of the *Qur'an*, but he did much more. Even in the sphere of *Qur'anic* learning, he made other solid contributions. He wrote no commentary on the *Qur'an*. In fact he was generally critical of the commentators of the *Qur'an* and of commentaries. He felt that, apart from occasional

¹ Quoted in the biography of Marmaduke Pickthal, entitled *Loyal Enemy*, p.411.

linguistic peculiarities and a few points which were related to certain incidents, the *Qur'an* was so lucid and easy to follow, that long commentaries were unnecessary. He has, however, dealt with the principles on which the commentaries should be written in a short pamphlet entitled *Al-Fauz-ul-Kabir*, which like other writings of the Shah Sahib is characterised by learning, fairness, and common-sense.

A noteworthy feature of this booklet is the criticism of the common Muslim practice of adopting unverified Jewish traditions to explain or embellish portions of the *Qur'an* relating to incidents, which are common to it and the Old and the New Testaments. He says, "It is worth mentioning that in the genuine traditions (of the Holy Prophet) there are very few stories about the earlier Prophets and those long tales with which the commentators fill their pages are usually taken from the Jewish store of legends." He adds that "The incorporation of Israeli legends is a calamity which has afflicted our religious thought and the correct thing is neither to confirm nor to deny them."

Muslim writers have vied with one another in narrating stories which provided, according to them, the occasions for various *Qur'anic* injunctions. Shah Waliullah is critical of this line of approach. For one thing, this hunt for *shan-i-nuzul* (the occasion of revelation) has resulted in the incorporation of apocryphal stories. Shah Waliullah writes about Waqidi, whose baseless stories and narrations, incidentally, provide the principal source for Sir William Muir and other European detractors of Islam and the Prophet, "And Muhammad bin Ishaq Waqidi has gone to extremes in story-telling and has virtually related incidents to illustrate each entry in the *Qur'an*. According to scholars of *hadis* most of these stories are baseless, and there are defects in the links between his authorities." But

apart from the adoption of baseless stories Shah Waliullah felt that this method of linking *Qur'anic* principles with incidental happenings greatly reduced their importance, and limited their application. He was in favour of giving as wide an interpretation to the injunctions of the *Qur'an* as possible. He said that the object of the Holy Book being "to reform human nature and correct wrong beliefs and injurious actions," the real occasion for different injunctions of the Holy Book was existence of these defects and not accidental happenings described by Waqidi and others.

Shah Waliullah's contribution to the study of *Hadis* was equally far-reaching. In fact he is primarily known as a *muhaddis* and it has been stated that links (*silsilah-i-ismad*) of all modern scholars of *hadis* in Indo-Pakistan sub continent can be traced to him. His main work in this field was the training of '*ulama*, who could carry on the teaching of *hadith* after him. Foremost amongst them was his son and successor, Shah' Abdul 'Aziz. Another celebrated pupil who studied under him at one stage was Sayyid Murtaza of Bilgram, who later spent so much time in Zabid in Yemen that he is generally known as Zabidi. Sayyid Murtaza achieved fame in Egypt by his great commentaries on the *Ihya* of al-Ghazzali, on *Qamus* and his works on *Hadis* and *fiqh*.

Apart from teaching and establishing a school for the study of *Hadis*, Shah Waliullah wrote a number of books on the subject, some of them were short pamphlets meant for the enlightenment of the beginners like *Chihil Hadis* (Forty Traditions), and *An-Nawadir min-al-Hadis* (The Unique amongst Traditions).

His more serious work related to the study of the earliest collection of traditions entitled *Muwatta*. He attached much greater importance to this collection than even to the more celebrated collections of Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim and wrote detailed commentaries on it both in Arabic and Persian. His preference for

Muwatta was, of course, on account of its age and authenticity, but it is significant that he foreshadowed modern tendencies.

It would have been surprising if Shah Waliullah with his wide range of interests and encyclopædic conception of knowledge had not touched upon Islamic jurisprudence. He did not deal with the application of Islamic Law, and no collection of his *fatwas* has come down, but he wrote a couple of pamphlets on more general aspects of Islamic jurisprudence and here also his contribution and approach are characteristic of the man. One of these entitled, *Insaf-fi-bayan-i-Sabab-al-Ikhtalaf*, is a brief, but a very interesting, fair and informative history of Islamic jurisprudence during the first five centuries of Islam. In less than fifty pages the author has dealt with the various stages of the collection of traditions, the growth of Islamic Law, the subjects on which differences arose between the four schools of Muslim jurisprudence and the peculiarities of these schools. In the end Shah Waliullah dealt with the factors responsible for the growth of rigid conformity (*taqlid*) amongst the Muslims and here an unusual touch of bitterness is discernible in his tone :

“And after these people some generations simply followed the principle of conformity. They would not distinguish truth from falsehood or the root from the branches. The most prominent jurist was the one who would talk most. He was to be loquacious so that he could memorize, without distinction, the true and the doubtful statements of (older) jurists and go on repeating them glibly ...And the generation which followed even exceeded them in slavish imitation and iniquity. People lost probity and would not ponder over religious matters; they started saying that they had found their elders following a certain path which they also would follow.

Shah Waliullah also wrote a pamphlet on the principles of *ijtihad* (independent interpretation) and *taqlid*

(conformity). In this he has briefly dealt with the general principles of *ijtihad* and the bulk of space is devoted to the question whether it is obligatory for a Muslim to adhere to one of the four recognised schools of Islamic Law or whether one can exercise one's own judgement. Shah Waliullah is of opinion that a layman should follow his own *Imam*, but a person well-versed in Islamic Law, who satisfies the qualifications of a *mujtahid*, can exercise his own judgement in choosing from the view-points of various schools or preferring to them any authentic expression of opinion by the Holy Prophet. This is a view from which perhaps only the extremists will differ. But apart from a fair analysis of a basic controversy, the book is remarkable for certain incidental observations, which forcefully bring out the humanism of Shah Waliullah. For example, while dealing with the right of a *mujtahid* to choose what is most convenient to the community in the view-points of various schools he says :

“Whoever carefully scrutinises the orders and injunctions of the Holy Prophet will notice that while the Holy Prophet has indicated what is desirable in various ways, he has not dealt with them in a very detailed manner.” He gives some illustrations in which the Holy Prophet did not impose categoric restrictions and says “this was due to the fact that the Holy Prophet left these matters to the opinion of the people and, as a fair observer will notice, this is generally true of the legal opinions of the Prophet. After a study of his injunctions we have come to the conclusion that he considered it advantageous to leave subsidiary matters unregulated and did not lay down detailed provisions.” After a study of the Holy Prophet's method Shah Waliullah was of opinion that it is inadvisable to be rigid in minor matters and the purpose of the law-giver is not defeated by minor variations. He says, “He who truly understands this matter will see that firstly in most cases of *ijtihad* the truth tends to be on both sides of the line

of difference ; secondly in religion there is elasticity rather than restriction; and thirdly it is not right to see only one point of view and insist on opposing others."

Many Muslim jurists seem to believe that whatever is most exacting must be most meritorious and prefer it to all others. Shah Waliullah, on the other hand, emphasised, in this booklet and elsewhere, that this point of view is opposed to that of the founder of Islam. He wrote in '*Iqd-ul-jid* that " the Holy Prophet's practice was that he preferred those interpretations which were convenient to his followers."

Not only was Shah Waliullah's approach marked by humanism, so rare amongst the theologians (as compared with the *sufis*) of Islam, but he also took a practical and rationalistic view of religion. The usual view about religious commandments—in Islam and other faiths—is that they are based on divine authority and as such must be obeyed. Shah Waliullah differed from this viewpoint. He held that religious injunctions were to be observed, not because they were ordered by a higher authority, but because they were calculated to confer individual or social benefits.

In the introductions of his best known book, *Hujjat-ullah-til-Balighah*—in which he examined Islamic ordinances in the light of this principle, he says:—

" Some people think that there is no usefulness involved in the injunctions of the Islamic Law and that in actions and rewards as prescribed by God there is no beneficial purpose. They think that the commandments of Islamic Law are similar to a master's ordering his servant to lift a stone or touch a tree in order to test his obedience and that in this there is no purpose except to impose a test so that if the servant obeys he is rewarded and if he disobeys he is punished. This view is completely incorrect. The traditions of the Holy Prophet and the consensus of opinion of those ages, which have been blessed, contradict this view."

Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah deals with these aspects of Islam, which are common to all Muslim countries, but Shah Waliullah was too much of a realist to ignore the problems nearer home or the part which religion could play in dealing with them. He was fully aware of the need for social reform in Indian society, and for the eradication of abuses which were a source of individual or social weakness. As most of these were due to deep-rooted customs, which Indian converts had brought with them from their Hindu environment, the simplest solution in his opinion was to revert to the simplicity and the sanity of the days of early Islam. The best treatment of this subject is in a chapter of *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyah*; but in his will (*Wasiyat-Namah*), which contains, in a nutshell, his basic teachings, Shah Waliullah devoted considerable space to it. The first great weakness of the Muslim society of the day consisted in extravagance, luxury, and "high living", which had grown up during the palmy days of the Mughul Empire. Shah Waliullah held that, as far as possible, the customs and practices of the days of Prophet and his successors should be adopted. The rapid conquest of the Muslim Arabs had created similar problems in the days of the second caliph and Shah Waliullah quoted in his will the instructions issued by that caliph.

Next, he dealt with those social abuses which the Muslims had taken over from the Hindus, and which even the Hindu reformers are now trying to eradicate. Perhaps the most objectionable amongst them was the social ban on the re-marriage of widows. "One of the objectionable customs of the Hindus is that when a husband dies, the widow is not allowed to re-marry". Shah Waliullah strongly condemned this and possibly hinting at the need for state or other outside action said, "May God bless them, who eradicates this evil." He also condemned the prevalent practice of fixing large alimonies, which were opposed to the practice of the Prophet and led to domestic maladjustment.

Last of all, he condemned the wasteful expenditure at the time of betrothal, marriage, funeral, the ceremonies of the fortieth day and the six monthly and yearly *fatihah* celebrations, which did not exist in original Islam.

Shah Waliullah's lead was followed by his son, Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz, but rigorous steps to eradicate these social evils were only taken by his grandson, Shah Muhammad Isma'il and Sayyid Ahmed Bareilvi, the famous disciple of Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz. Through their preachings and pamphlets they inaugurated a vigorous movement of social reform.

"Half a century had not passed after the death of Shah Waliullah, when a movement started in India which had the same goal which Shah Sahib had placed before himself. If we study the letters and statements of Sayyid Ahmed Bareilvi and *Mansab-i-imamat* and *Abaqat* and *Taqwiat-ul-Iman* and other writings of Shah Isma'il Shahid we find the same language which was used by Shah Waliullah. What Shah Sahib did was that through his teaching of the *Qur'an* and the Traditions and through the influence of his personality he created a large class of pious and healthy minded people. After him, his four sons, particularly Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz, greatly widened this circle so that there were thousands of people in the four corners of the country who had imbibed Shah Sahib's ideas, had a correct view of Islam and with their scholarship and noble lives were instrumental in extending the influence of Shah Sahib and his group. This paved the way for the movement, which was ultimately to take birth in Shah Sahib's circle or rather in his own house.

Sayyid Ahmed Bareilvi and Shah Ismail Shahid, in spirit and reality, represented one personality, and I do not consider their united personality to be an independent force for the renovation of Islam. Their movement was really an after-math of Shah Waliullah's efforts for the revival and reform of Islam."

Many of the reforms which Shah Waliullah and his successors advocated in the social sphere were these which are usually associated with the Wahhabi reformers. Shah Waliullah's grandson, Shah Isma'il, and a few of his companions became conversant, during their pilgrimage, with the measures taken by the Wahhabis during their first occupation of the Hijaz and adopted some of their religious usages. Shah Waliullah was himself a keen student of *Ibn Taimiyah*, held in great reverence by the Wahhabis, and as he was a student in Medina at about the same time when the founder of the Wahhabi movement was there, both were presumably subjected to similar influences and some of their teachings may have been common. The movement initiated by Shah Waliullah and carried on by his sons and grandsons, had a few features in common with the Wahhabi movement, but the view, made current by Hunter in *Our Indian Musalmans*, that the Indian reform movement was of Wahhabi origin is basically incorrect. Its programme and principles were all laid down in Shah Waliullah's writings before any trace of a Wahhabi connection was visible and Sayyid Ahmed Bareilvi and Shah Isma'il Shahid had been vigorously preaching the programme of social reform before they went to the Hijaz. Besides, Shah Waliullah's movement was different in many fundamentals from its Arab counterpart. Its abhorrence of extremism, its strong links with sufism, its humanism in matters of law and jurisprudence, its conformity with the traditional view-point, except when it was blatantly un-Islamic or harmful, make it basically different from the rigid puritanism of the desert of central Arabia.

Shah Waliullah wrote learned works and initiated powerful and beneficial movements, but perhaps no less important are the invisible qualities of approach and outlook, which he bequeathed to Muslim religious thought in the Indo-Pakistan sub continent. His work is characterised by mature knowledge, insight, moderation

and tolerance, but the quality, on which he laid the greatest emphasis, in theory and in practice, was '*adl* or '*adalat* (justice, fairness, balance). His works and views bear ample testimony to the way he observed this principle in practice and he lost few opportunities of emphasising in theory its role in maintaining the social fabric. Perhaps the fullest exposition of this is in *Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah* :

'*Adalat* too, like generosity, has several aspects so that when it makes its appearance in our general behaviour, in our sitting down and rising up, in our eating and drinking, in sleeping and waking up from sleep, in our walking, in our speaking, in the type of our dress, etc.—then it is called *adl* ; when it makes its appearance in the earning of wealth and the spending of it—then it is called economy ; if it is observed in the *tadbir-i-manzil*, then it is given the name of *hurriyyat*. The methods adopted for maintaining the social system in accordance with proper standards and working them out in the best manner is called *siyasat* (politics). When this tendency appears in the behaviour of man towards friends and relations—then it is called *husn-i-mahazarah* or *husn-i-ma'asharat*."¹

Some idea can be had of Shah Waliullah's quality of work and his temper from the quotations which we have given from his works, but they do not give a proper indication of his importance in the history of Muslim India. Shah Waliullah was a prolific writer. He wrote bulky volumes on numerous branches of Islamic learning, but he did not focus learning and literary gifts in one or two masterpieces. Many of his books would have gained by omission and compression. It is not possible to assess his worth simply on the basis of the style and the contents of his writings. His role in the religious history of this sub continent can be properly measured only by the cumulative effect of his work—his writings, his academic work, the contribution of the persons trained by him and, most

¹ Urdu Translation, II, 359-60.

of all, the achievements of the school of thought founded by him. Shah Waliullah's real greatness lies in the fact that by adopting, in controversial matters a line on which all differing sections of Muslim India. —the Shi'ahs and the Sunnis, the *sufis* and the *mullahs*, the Hanafis and the Wahhabis, the *Mujaddidis* and the *Wahadat-ul-Wajudis*, the Mu'tazilis and the 'Ash'aris—could join hands ; he worked out a religious system on which all but the extremists could agree, and thus a spiritual basis for the building up of a nation was provided.

Luckily Islam is free from the problem of national churches, but owing to historic, racial, linguistic and geographical factors different schools and view-points gain prominence in different Muslim countries. In Iran Shi'ism is the national religion, while in the desert of the Najd, Wahhabi puritanism is dominant. Similarly different countries have adopted, according to their peculiar development, different schools of law—the Shafi'i, the Hanbali, the Maliki and the Hanafi. If the beliefs, the legal traditions and the religious tendencies of the modern Muslim India and Pakistan were to be examined from this point of view, it would seem that the pattern of religious thought which is most dominant here was established by Shah Waliullah.

CHAPTER XVII

SHAH WALIULLAH (II)

His work in the Political Field

Few persons in the long and chequered history of medieval Hind-Pakistan have so deeply influenced the lives of their contemporaries¹ as Shah Waliullah of Delhi (1702-1762)². An erudite scholar, a profound thinker, a broad-minded theologian, a pious saint and a zealous reformer, he was one of the most outstanding figures of his age. Nature had lavishly endowed him with pre-eminent qualities of head and heart³ and he used them fully in bringing about the intellectual renaissance of the Muslims in this sub continent.⁴ Born in an age of decadence and chaos, he visualized a world of peace and progress. His seminary, *Madrasah-i-Rahimiyah*, became the nucleus of a revolutionary movement for the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam⁵ and scholars flocked to it

¹ For a contemporary evaluation of his work, see *Kalamat-i-Tayyabat* (Matba' Matla'-ul-'Ulum, Moradabad, 1305 A. H.) p. 115, *Maktubat-i-Shah Abu Sa'id* a unique MS in the personal collection of Afzal-ul-'Ulama Dr. Abdul Haqq of Madras.

² For a short autobiographical account, see '*Al-Juzw-ul-Latif fi Tarjamah-i-'Abd-al-Za'ij*' (Ahmadi Press, Delhi); also published as an appendix to *Anfas-u'l-'Arifin*, Delhi (1355 A. H.). For an English rendering of the above see *Hayat-i-Wali*, Maulavi Rahim Bakhsh (Afzal-ul-Matabia, Delhi) 1319 A. H.) *Shah Waliullah aur un ki Siyasi Tahrik*, 'Ubaidullah Sindhi (Sind-Sagar Academy, Lahore).

³ Shah Waliullah has himself referred to these special qualities. Vide *Al-Juzw-ul-Latif* (appended to *Anfas-u'l-'Arifin*), p. 204; *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyah*, I, 81.

⁴ Maulana Shibli assigns him a place higher than Ibn-i-Taimiyah (ob. 1328), Ibn-i-Rushd (ob. 1198), Imam Razi (ob. 1209) and even Imam Ghazzali (ob. 1111), vide his *Tarikh-i-Ilm-i-Kalam*.

⁵ Shah Waliullah believed in the dynamic nature of Islam and so he appealed to the theologians of his day to cast aside conservatism and to study Islam as a living faith, capable of guiding the destinies of men in all circumstances and under all climes. "The simple people of our age", he remarks in his book *Musaffa*, "are totally indifferent towards it (*ijtihad*). Like camels they have strings in their noses". In this very book he has asked the '*ulama* of his day to think afresh over the problems that arise from day to day because *Ijtihad* is obligatory in every age'.

from every nook and corner of the sub continent. Indeed the movement started by Shah Waliullah symbolized the dawn of a new age in the realm of Muslim theology and literature.

Shah Waliullah was the first¹ scholar of the sub continent to translate " the Book of God " into Persian which was more commonly understood.² It was he who popularised the *ahadis*³ (Traditions of the Prophet) and deservedly won the appellation of *muhaddis*. His *chef d'oeuvre*, *Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah*, is one of the finest monuments of Muslim scholarship. The author's remarkable insight into the fundamentals of Islam, his lucid exposition and cogent reasoning cast a halo of immortality about him. But Shah Waliullah's achievements in the realm of religious thought do not exhaust his claim to greatness. He was not merely a pious religious scholar of eminence, he was also a clear-headed political thinker. His sensitive soul reacted to the disturbed political conditions that prevailed in Hind-Pakistan in the eighteenth century and contributed essential elements to the present currents of thought in Islam.

The decline of the central authority during the eighteenth century has been described elsewhere.⁴ The

¹ Long before Shah Waliullah Maulana Shihabud-din Daulatabadi (ob. 1444) had produced his famous *Bahr-i-Mawwaj*. But it was more of a commentary than a translation. Shaikh 'Abdul Haqq Muhaddis Dihlawi has rightly criticised Maulana Daulatabadi for having rendered his meanings obscure by the use of rhetorical and florid language. (*Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*, p. 175), Shah Waliullah's purpose was quite different. He wanted to make the *Qur'an* intelligible to the ordinary intellect since this was necessary for the success of his religious as well as political programme. See his introduction to *Fath-ur-Rahman*, pp. 1-4. *Fath-ur-Rahman* is decidedly the first authentic, intelligible and reliable translation of the *Qur'an*. His two books *Maqaddamat-fi-Tafsir-i-Qur'an Majid* and *Al-Fauz-ul-Kabir-fi-Usul-il-Tafsir* are safe and valuable guides for others undertaking the difficult task of translating the *Qur'an*.

² Continuing the spirit of his mission under different circumstances his sons—Maulana Rafi'ud-din (ob. 1817) and Shah 'Abdul Qadir (ob. 1814 translated the *Qur'an* into Urdu.

³ Of all the collections of *ahadis* Shah Waliullah laid great emphasis on the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik (ob. 795) because it fitted in with his juridico-theological thought and contained the best exposition of the earliest traditions of Islam which he was anxious to revive and re-establish.

⁴ Chapter II.

Marathas, the Sikhs and the Jats took full advantage of the weakness of the central government. They began to strike at the tottering Mughul Empire with ever greater confidence. They even knocked at the gates of Delhi. Their atrocities struck terror into the hearts of the people.¹ The Sikh depredations convulsed the Panjab. Their bands crossed the Jumna and plundered important towns in the Doab. They piled horror upon horror.² The rise of the Jats created a thorny problem for the central government. So close to the capital, they were a perpetual terror for the people of Delhi. Harcharan Das, the author of *Chahar-Gulzar-i-Shuja'i*, thus describes the sufferings of the people on the eve of Jat attack : "The inhabitants of Delhi roamed from house to house, lane to lane, in despair and bewilderment, like a wrecked ship tossing on the waves ; every one was running about like a lunatic, distracted, puzzled and unable to take care of himself."³

As if these internal shocks were not enough to paralyse the structure of the Mughul government, Nadir Shah invaded India in 1739. His invasion was the last straw on the camel's back. The prestige of the Mughul Empire departed for ever, and it was robbed of its wealth. Anti-Mughul movements gathered momentum and unprecedented scenes of rapine and plunder sent a wave of horror and disgust into the hearts of the people.

¹ Sir Jadunath Sarkar quotes the following account of Vaneshwar Vidyalanker, the court pundit of the Maharaja of Bardwan, written in November, 1744: "Shahu Rajah's troops are niggard of pity, slayers of pregnant women and infants, of Brahmans and the poor, fierce of spirit, expert in robbing the property of every one and in committing every sinful act. They created a local cataclysm and caused the extirpation of the people of Bengal villages like an (ominous) comet.....In one day they can cross a hundred Jojans. They slay the unarmed, the chaste wives, and children. They rob all property and abduct chaste wives". If it comes to a battle they secretly flee away to some other country. *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, 88. See also pp. 86-87, for Gangaram's account of the atrocities and devastation committed by the Marathas.

² *Later Mughals*, I, 96-99.

³ *Chahar Gulzar-i-Shuja'i* (Rotograph of the British Museum MS in Muslim University Library). See also *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, 482. Sarkar says that these ravages were long afterwards remembered by the Delhi populace under the name of *Jagardi* on a par with the raids of the Marathas and the Afghans.

Delhi was the core of the Empire and so it felt the repercussions of every internal disturbance and external pressure.¹

Sir Jadunath Sarkar recounting the misfortunes of the people of Delhi during this period refers to "frequent panic among the citizens whenever any attack was expected, the flight of the rich, the closing of the shops, the looting of the unprotected houses by the ruffians of the city population who took advantage of the public alarm and confusion ; the utter spoliation of the peasantry and ruin of the surrounding villages by organised bands of brigands or soldiers out foraging and consequent famine prices in the capital ; the incurable intrigue, inefficiency and moral decay of the imperial court."² These misfortunes and calamities so overwhelmed the Delhi public that life itself became a burden for it. Some Muslims, in these circumstances, thought of committing suicide by burning themselves to ashes.³ Despondency and pessimism were like canker for their spirits. Shah Waliullah saw this happening before his own eyes. It wrung his heart and seared his soul.⁴ But he was not the man to allow despondency to blur his vision. Clear-headed and bold when almost every one else was confused and terrified, he began to search for the sources of all their troubles. A keen and critical student of human history, he soon diagnosed the disease. Indeed what Mathew Arnold wrote

¹ Mirza Mazhar Jan Janan (ob. 1780) also refers in a letter to the constant anxiety and worry to which the people of Delhi were exposed.

Kalamat-i-Tayyabat, p. 66. See also *Nala-i-Dard*, Bhopal, 1310 A. H., p. 20, written by Khwaja Mir Dard in 1153 A. H./1740 *Shah Waliullah Ke Siyasi Maktubat*, p. 77.

² *Fall of the Mughal Empire*

³ See *Tarikh-i-Mashaikh-i-Chisht*, p. 331.

⁴ The melancholy of his heart found expression in the couplet :

کان نجوما او مضت فی الغیاب

عیون الافاعی او روس العقارب

The stars, twinkling in the darkness, appear to me the eyes of the serpents and the stings of the scorpions.

about Goethe applies with striking aptness to him—

He took the suffering human race,
And read each wound, each weakness clear ;
And struck his finger on the place,
And said: Thou ailest there and here.

Shah Waliullah belonged to a family which had a close and intimate knowledge of the political developments in the country. His ancestors had served the Mughul Empire in the days of its glory, and they had also seen its magnificent structure crumble like a house of cards. His grandfather, Shaikh Wajih-ud-din was an important officer in the army of Shah Jahan (1627-1658) and had supported Prince Aurangzib in the War of Succession—a service for which he was generously rewarded by the new Emperor on his accession. When 'Alamgir started on his Deccan campaigns, Shaikh Wajih-ud-din also followed him but was killed by robbers on the way. Shah Waliullah's father, Shah 'Abdur Rahim (ob. 1718) was one of those outstanding scholars of 'Alamgir's reign who had participated in the compilation of the *Fatawa-i-'Alam-giri*. He left a deep impression of his erudition and learning on the minds of all those who came into contact with him.¹ Some of his political predictions have been recorded by Shah Waliullah and they show his keen insight into and thorough knowledge of the trends of the period.

Shah 'Abdur Rahim had seen Mughul forces winning laurels in many a battle.² He lived also to see the beginning of the anti-climax and the gradual disintegration of Mughul power. He is reported to have exhorted Nizam-ul-Mulk to wage war against the

¹ *Anfas-ul-'Arifin*, p. 51 et seq.

² *Ibid.*

Marathas.¹ Shah Waliullah's uncle, Shaikh Abu Raza Muhammad, gave moral support to 'Alamgir in his campaign against the Satnamis.²

Born and brought up in this family with long tradition of political knowledge and experience, Shah Waliullah could hardly fail to react to the disturbed political conditions of the eighteenth century. He was in his seventeenth year when he succeeded to the professorial chair of his father—the same year in which Muhammad Shah ascended the throne of Delhi (1719). He saw a dozen rulers occupy the throne of Delhi.³

Some of these rulers had great personal regard and respect for him. Muhammad Shah is said to have offered a magnificent building for his *madrasah*.⁴ Ahmad Shah (1748-1754) and his mother Udham Bai once visited him and stayed with him for several hours.⁵

Shah Waliullah's knowledge of social and political conditions was not confined to Hind-Pakistan alone. During his stay in the Hijaz he had studied the conditions of other Muslim lands as well.⁶ He was thus fully

¹ Maulana Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi informs us in his foreword to Maulana Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadvi's *Sirat-i-Sayyid Ahmad Shahid* about the existence of a collection of Shah 'Abdur Rahim's letters in the Usmania University Library which contains a letter addressed by the great scholar to Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I exhorting him to wage war against the Marathas. Mr. Shaikh Muhammad Ikram has probably quoted the same letter in his *Rud-i-Kausar* (pp. 377-78); but I think that this letter was written by Shah Waliullah and has been wrongly attributed to Shah 'Abdur Rahim. I have found it incorporated in an old collection of Shah Waliullah's letters in the original handwriting of Shaikh Muhammad Ashiq of Phulat. See also *Shah Waliullah Dihlawi key Siyasi Maktubat*, pp. 80-81.

² *Anfas-ul-Arifin*, p. 90.

³ 'Alamgir (1658-1707); Bahadur Shah I (1707-1712); Jahandar Shah (1712-1713); Farrukh Siyar (1712-1719); Niku Siyar (1717); Rafi'-ud-Darajat (1719); Muhammad Shah (1716-1748); 'Alamgir II (1754-1759); Shah 'Alam II (1759-1806).

⁴ *Shah Waliullah aur un ki Siyasi Tahrik*, pp. 42-43. I have not been able to find any contemporary evidence for this very significant statement of Maulana 'Ubaid-ullah Sindhi. Maulvi Bashir-uddin has, however mentioned this fact in his *Waq'at-i-Dar-ul-Hakumat-i-Delhi*, II, 286.

⁵ *Shah Waliullah Dehlawi Key Siyasi Maktubat*, pp. 68-69.

⁶ See *Kalimat-i-Tayyabat* (p. 209) for the following statement of the great saint
احوال مردم هند برما مخفی نیست که خود مولد و منشاء فقیراست و بلاد
عرب را نیز دیده ایم و سیر نموده - احوال مردم ولایت از ثقات آجاشنیده ایم

conversant with social and political trends in the Muslim world in the eighteenth century. Apart from all this he had a remarkable knowledge of human history and civilisation. One need only glance through the pages of *Hujjat-ullah-il-Baligha*, *Badur-ul-Bazighah* and the *Izalat-ul-khifa* to be convinced of this assertion. When he discussed the problems of the world around him he gives convincing proof of his political realism. His scholarship did not isolate him from the main current of life. On the contrary it widened his outlook and deepened his insight.

Shah Waliullah believed that it was his mission to bring about vital changes in the social and political order. The source of this conviction was a prophetic dream which has assumed the significance of a historical event in his life,¹ because henceforth he began to believe that he was destined to bring about a new order.

His mystic experience had a social significance for him. "I feel that the revelation of these spiritual secrets," he writes in *Ham'at* "is intended not only for the perfection and education of my own self but also for the guidance and betterment of all the people."² Once he saw the Prophet telling him in a dream "God has decided that a group of the Muslim *ummah* will be regenerated through you." He believed that God had made him "the spokesman, the philosopher, the guide and the leader of his age" and with this conviction he proceeded boldly to remove the social and political abuses of his time.

Shah Waliullah surveyed the world around him with the keen and clear vision of a political realist and diagnosed many diseases of the body-politic. Like most Muslim writers of the middle ages he did not simply focus his attention on the administrative and financial bankruptcy of the state. He went deep into the causes of

¹He dreamt this dream on May 5, 1731 while in Mecca. See *Fuyuz-ul-Haramain*, pp. 89-90.

² *Ham'at*, p. 35.

moral inertia and analysed carefully the factors which had devitalised Muslim society by disturbing its economic equilibrium and creating schism in its soul. He surveyed the social and economic structure not from the pedestal of the royal throne but from the vantage points of the peasant's hut and the worker's cottage. He believed that '*adl* (equity and justice in every sphere of human relationship) and *tawazun* (balance in economic relationship) alone could sustain a political structure. He was fully alive to those inequities in the economic system which had crept into the economy of the Empire and impoverished its revenue producing classes. In an illuminating chapter of his *Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah*¹ he has discussed the social and economic abuses which led to the downfall of the Roman and the Sassanid Empires—the principles of hereditary succession, narrow and materialistic outlook of the governing classes, their licentiousness and debauchery, the economic exploitation of the people, an inequitable and cumbersome taxation system, the misery of the peasants and artisans and the growth of parasitic classes inside and outside the court. While discussing these factors he remarks : "there is no need of repeating these old stories when you are seeing now all these things in the lives of the rulers of your cities."² This single sentence is the strongest comment on the decadence of the Mughul Empire in the eighteenth century and the deplorable selfishness of all those who were at the helm of affairs.

Shah Waliullah trenchantly criticised the Mughul rulers, nobles and officers for their indolence and corruption and asked them frankly and firmly, in an open letter, to give up their pursuit of pleasure and to repent for thier past misdeeds.³ In his *Tafhimat* he has put his finger on the weakness of every section of Hind-Pakistan society of those days and he has exhorted every one to shake

¹ Vol. I, pp. 196-201.

² *Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah*, Vol. I., p. 199.

³ *Shah Waliullah Dehlawi Ke Siyasi Makrubat*, p. 43.

off his indolence and lethargy and to meet the challenge of the time. No social, moral or economic abuse which was corroding Muslim society in the eighteenth century escaped his scrutiny. Addressing the parasitic and rapacious nobility of his day he says : “ Oh Amirs ! Do you not fear God ? (How is it that) you have so completely thrown yourself into the pursuit of momentary pleasures, and have neglected those people who were committed to your care ! The result is that the strong are devouring the (weak) people.....All your mental faculties are directed towards providing yourselves with sumptuous food and soft-skinned and beautiful women for enjoyment and pleasure. You do not turn your attention to anything except good clothes and magnificent palaces.”¹ Turning to the soldiers of his day, Shah Waliullah exhorts them to eschew all non-Islamic habits and practices and to develop the spirit of *jihad* and the character of the soldiers of Islam. He condemns them for lack of discipline, indifference towards the performance of their duties, addiction to wine and other intoxicants and their cruel dealings with the people. Addressing the artisans and workers, the great saint-scholar expresses his deep regret at their lack of honesty, neglect of religious duties, faith in regarding cults and superstitious beliefs, disregard of family obligations, indifferences towards children and other immoral practices. “ Spend your mornings and evenings in prayer,” he tells them, “ and devote the major part of the day to your professional work. Always keep your expenditure less than your income and whatever you save spend it on helping travellers and the needy and keep something in reserve for unforeseen expenses and sudden calamities.” Shah Waliullah’s indictment of the lives of the workers, artisans and the lower middle classes reveals in unmistakable terms the deplorable fact that family life—the

¹ This and the other extracts that follow have been taken from the *Tafhimat-i-Ilahia*, published by the *Majlis-i-Ilmi*, Dabhalil. The degenerate moral condition of the nobility at this time may be studied in details in *Muraqqa’-i-Dehl’* by Nawab Dargah Quli Khan, pp. 7-8.

key to a healthy civil life—had completely broken down. Turning to the general Muslim public Shah Waliullah exhorts them to reform their lives, to make a distinction between what is lawful and what is unlawful, to perform their duties towards their wives and children.....to economise in their expenses, to give up parasitic habits and to strive to earn by honest means according to their needs. Lastly he emphasizes the need for everyone to earn a livelihood. This analysis of the moral and economic shortcomings in the Muslim society arises from Shah Waliullah's conviction that it was the Muslim society which ultimately determined the strength of the political fabric. Only a healthy society free from all moral abuses and economic distemper could fashion a political structure based on '*adl* and *tawazun*.

In his famous work *Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah* the saint thus refers to the causes of chaos and disintegration :—

“ The ruin of the state these days is due to two reasons : Firstly, pressure on the public treasury which is due to the fact that the people have developed a habit of obtaining money from the exchequer without performing any corresponding duty. They either come out with the excuse that they are soldiers or '*ulama* and have therefore a claim on the treasury ; or they claim to belong to that group of men to whom the king himself presents rewards *i.e.*, pious *sufis* or poets or other groups who receive emoluments without doing any service to the state. These people diminish the sources of other people's income and are a burden on the economy.

“ The second cause of this widespread desolation is the heavy taxation of peasants, merchants and workers and unjust dealings with these groups. The result is that all those who are loyal to the state and obey its orders are being slowly ruined. The refractory and the

evaders of taxes are becoming more refractory and they do not pay the taxes. The prosperity of a country depends upon light taxes and reasonable and necessary appointments in the army and other departments. The people should clearly understand this secret.”¹

In his political letters² Shah Waliullah has dealt at length with the causes of political chaos and economic ruin. In a letter addressed to ‘the Emperor, the ministers and the nobles’ who constituted the Mughul bureaucracy at the centre, he discusses the basic causes of chaos, gives his own suggestions and then assures them : “ It is expected from Divine kindness that if you act according to these suggestions, there will appear efficiency in administration, stability in the state and enhancement in its prestige”. He gives the following advice to the Emperor and the nobles :

“ The Jat strongholds should be brought under control and a lesson should be taught to the miscreants so that there may be no recrudescence of such disturbances.” Shah Waliullah attached greater importance to the Jat menace than to the Sikh or Maratha activities. The reason was that the Jats were so near the capital that their contumacious activities had a direct and immediate effect on the machinery of the central government”.³

In a letter to Hafiz Jarullah, Shah Waliullah writes : “ Delhi has suffered a cataclysm. The Jats plundered old Delhi and the government was too weak to crush their uprising and prevent their depredations. They plundered the people, violated their honour and put

¹ *Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah*, I, 79.

² Discovered by the author and published by him in 1950 from Aligarh : “*Shah Waliullah Dehlawi Ke Siyasi Maktubat*.”

³ Irvine writes: Between Mathura and Delhi the road had been entirely stopped for two months and a crowd of many hundred travellers, including the wife of Amin-ud-din Sambhali, had collected. In 1712 the Dutch envoy and his party also found the road infested by robbers, who were, no doubt, Jats.....the same state of thing is reported in the diary of our own envoy, John Surman. *Later Mughals*, I, 321.

J. H. Sarkar says that when the Jats attacked Delhi all the bazars, lands and houses were crammed with refugees. *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, 482-83.

fire to their houses.....This plunder started in early *Rajab* 1161 A. H. (1747) and continued till the end of *Sha'ban*.¹

(ii) The *khalisah* should be extended up to Akbarabad on one side and Sirhind on the other because one of the causes of weakness in the administration is the decrease in the *khalisah* land and the deficit in treasury.²

Shah Waliullah had clearly realised that unless the area under direct administration increased,³ the Emperor would always be at the mercy of the provincial governors and *jagirdars*, and there would be no financial stability at the centre.

(iii) *Jagirs* should not be given to petty *mansabdars*. They do not succeed in establishing their control over their *jagirs*, therefore they farm out its revenues to farmers. Thus they aggravate the miseries of the peasants and the difficulties of the state.⁴

The only Mughul noble who seems to have realised the wisdom of this advice was Nizam-ul-Mulk. Irvine writes about him : " He also wishes to reduce the extent of assigned lands (*jagirs*) and to give those which were difficult of management to the more powerful nobles and those yielding income easily to the smaller men."⁵

(iv) Traitors and turncoats should be strictly dealt with. Exemplary punishment should be given to those who have supported the enemy. They should be deprived

¹ *Siyasi Maktubat*, p. 89.

² *Ibid*.

³ The author of *Tarikh-i-Alamgir-Sani* writes : "The parganah in the province of Delhi and some other provinces, which had been made Crown land (sic) and out of whose revenues the Emperor's personal servants received their pay, had now gone out of their hands. Saharanpur, whose revenues had been assigned to *jagirdars*, was seized by Najab Khan Ruhela; the Jat Raja had seized the *Mahals* near Agra. Madho Singh of Jaipur had taken possession of Narnol and that side. Not a single *Mahal* remained under the *Khalsa*. In addition to this, the *Wazir* used to give the *Mahals* of the privy purse in lieu of payment now to the Badakhshis, now to the MarathasSo, there was no money for the Emperor's own meals and those of the ladies of the harem, whose only source of maintenance was the rent of the privy purse estates". Translated by Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, 35.

⁴ *Siyasi Maktubat*, pp. 42, 160.

⁵ *Later Mughals*, II, p. 132.

of their *jagirs* and *mansabs*, so that others may not follow their example.¹

(v) Armies should be properly organized and trained.²

(a) Only those persons should be appointed superintendents who are of good breeding, brave, kind to their colleagues and sincerely loyal to the Emperor. (b) All those soldiers who have betrayed their trust should be dismissed. (c) The soldiers should be regularly paid. In case of delay in getting salaries they borrow money on interest. This ruins them.³

(vi) The practice of farming the revenues in the *Khalsah* areas should be dispensed with because the farming system ruins the land and brings distress to the cultivator.

(vii) Only those persons should be appointed *qazis* and *muhtasibs* who have never been charged with bribery. They should be orthodox in their beliefs.

(viii) The *imams* of mosques should be well-paid and should be instructed to lead the five prayers punctually. No one should be allowed to show scant respect to the sacred month of *Ramazan*.

(ix) The Emperor and the nobles should not waste their time in the pursuit of pleasure. They should repent for their past misdeeds and abstain from indulgence in luxury.⁴

¹ *Siyasi Muktubat*, pp. 42, 160-161.

² Sir Wolsely Haig writes about the Mughul army in the eighteenth century, "The demoralisation of the army was one of the principal factors in the disintegration of the Empire..... the later emperors had no personal body of troops with which to assert authority.....The general laxity of discipline converted the army into a mob. Drill was unknownHe (the soldier) mounted guard or not has he liked, the punishment for absence, not invariably inflicted consisting in the loss of a day's pay. There was indeed, no regular punishment for military crimes.....In an army thus composed and thus commanded no military spirit was to be looked for, and the imperial troops, both officer and men, were characterised by a complete absence of the will to victory. "Cambridge History of India, IV, 374-376. See also Irvine : *The Army of the Indian Mughuls*, pp. 296-299.

³ The author of *Tarikh-i-'Alamgir-Sani* writes : "The starving troops had sold their horses, the infantry had no clothing on their backs:.....The soldiers remained in their own houses, none attended in the Emperor's retinue when he rode out". See *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, 37.

⁴ *Siyasi Muktubat*, pp. 42-44.

Shah Waliullah's political programme as well as the organisation of his movement was determined by two clear and distinct objectives. His immediate concern was the restoration of peaceful conditions without disturbing the existing social and political set-up. His reform movement which involved a revolutionary change in ideas could be launched under peaceful conditions only. He therefore exhorted the Mughul ruler to rise to the occasion and set things right by adopting certain bold administrative measures.¹ The Mughul government was, no doubt, corrupt and inefficient but it alone could sustain the old social and political order and thus have afforded him an opportunity for launching his revolutionary schemes. The strengthening of the Mughul Empire was however only one of his means to an end. His real aim was the establishment of a socio-political structure on the lines and traditions of early Islam. No one realised better than Shah Waliullah the nature of the arduous and exacting struggle that had to be carried on incessantly in order to translate that ideal into practice. His book *Izalat-ul-Khifa* embodies the ideology of the political revolution which Shah Waliullah envisaged and towards which he had concentrated his whole life.

Shah Waliullah wanted an intellectual revolution to precede the political change which he had contemplated. This had at first to be brought about in the minds of men, before the political organisation would be suitably reformed. A degenerate society, could not evolve a political order which would represent the highest achievement of human wisdom and integrity. He trained a small band of devoted scholars for this purpose.²

To this group belonged :—

(1) Maulana Muhammad 'Ashiq of Phulat,

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ma'fuzat-i-Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz*, p. 40.

(2) Maulana Nurullah of Budhana,

(3) Maulana Amin Kashmiri,

(4) Shah Abu Sa'id of Rai-Bareilly.

Each one of them dedicated his life to the propagation of Shah Waliullah's religious and political ideals. Shah Waliullah considered Maulana 'Ashiq 'Ali' not only the best repository of his teachings but also the best exponent of his views. He was the teacher of Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz whom he initiated into the mysteries of the religious and political philosophy of Shah Waliullah. Maulana Nurullah² was the father-in-law and teacher of Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz. Shah Abu Sa'id,³ maternal grandfather of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, was an eminent saint of his day and was intensely devoted to Shah Waliullah. Maulana Muhammad Amin⁴ was an outstanding scholar of his time and had instructed some of the best scholars of the age, including Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz. This posse of hardworking and erudite scholars worked to bring about that revolution in the realm of ideas which Shah Waliullah considered to be the *sine qua non* for the success of his movement.⁵

Shah Waliullah was deeply concerned at the unruly atmosphere created by the activities of the contumacious elements in the country. He considered it a serious obstacle to the growth of civil sense, the life-breath of a civilised society. "A society which does not possess civil sense" he says in his *Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah* "suffers from *akilat* (a disease which corrodes the

¹ For Shah Waliullah's regard for him, see *Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah*, I, 5; *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyah*, p. 25; *Muqaddamah Khair-i-Kasir*, p. 16; *Anfas-ul-'Arifin*, p. 65; *Shah Waliullah Dehlawi Key Siyasi Makruba*, pp. 68-78; also 34-37.

² See *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyah*, I, 1. Also *Malasir-ul-Abrar* (MS. collection of letters by Maulvi Sayyid Abul Qasim).

³ For biographical notices see, *Sirat-i-Sayyid Ahmad Shahid* (MS. with Dr. 'Abdul Haq of Madras); *Malasir-ul-Abrar* (MS).

⁴ *Ujala-i-Naf'ah* by Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz, pp. 94-102. *Kalamat-i-Tayyabat*, pp. 211-220.

⁵ Shah Waliullah's ideology was propagated from the following centres :

1) *Madrasah-i-Rahimiyah*, Delhi. (2) *Madrasah-i-Najib-ud-Daulah*, Najibabadi. (3) *Dairah-i-Shah 'Ilm-ullah in Rae Bareilly*. (4) *Madrasah-i-Shah Mu'in in Thatta*.

bones)”. It was his firm conviction that any act which contravenes the requirements of civil life causes the displeasure of God.² He apprised the political authorities of the need and urgency of crushing the recalcitrant elements and to restore peaceful conditions. He asked them to carry on their military operations in a considerate manner, causing no hurt to the civilian population. He thus warns Najib-ud-Daulah on the eve of a campaign:— “If you want to achieve the goal, you should see that no soldier tampers with the life and property of any Muslim or *zimmi* of Delhi.”³

He repeats this again and again in his letters. “The Muslims, whether of Delhi or of any other place,” he writes to Najib-ud-Daulah, “have suffered so many blows and have been pillaged and plundered so often that the knife has reached the bone. It is an occasion for mercy.”⁴ He requests Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah in a letter to exert his influence to check the upward trend in prices⁵ and to stop the loot and plunder which was going on all round.⁶

Shah Waliullah advised the rulers to check the forces of disruption by the appointment of suitable officers stationed at reasonable distances to enforce law and order. In every province there should be a high officer with sufficient forces to suppress lawlessness and rebellion. Only when this was done would it be possible to bring about economic reform and prosperity.⁷

¹ *Hujjatullah-il-Balighah* II, 408.

² *Ibid.*, II, p. 373.

³ *Siyasi Maktubat*, p. 60.

⁴ *Siyasi Maktubat*, p. 62. See *Kallamat-i-Tayyabat* (pp. 56,66) for Mirza Mazhar's concern at the chaotic condition in Delhi.

⁵ *Siyasi Maktubat*, p. 84. Sarkar writes on the authority of the Delhi Chronicle : “Grain became very dear, *mung dal* was so scarce that only half a *seer* could be had for a rupee, *mash dal* 5 *seers* and wheat 9 *seers*; even medicines became very dear and scanty on account of the exactions of the Marathas”. *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, 154.

⁶ *Siyasi Maktubat*, p. 84.

⁷ *Tafhimat*, I, 216.

The Mughul rulers had grown effete. Shah Waliullah's clarion call fell on deaf ears. In fact their nerves were shattered and they were utterly incapable of checking the forces of chaos and disruption. Shah Waliullah lost all confidence in the Mughul Emperor. If peace and tranquillity was to be established in the country ; if the forces of disruption were to be checked ; if society was to be rescued from disintegration and moral degeneration other persons had to be prepared for the task. The Mughul Empire was incapable of such a herculean task. What Shah Waliullah wanted to resuscitate and preserve was not the Mughul Empire, but the social harmony and the economic stability of better days. With that purpose he wrote pathetic letters¹ to Nizam-ul-Mulk and persuaded him to exert his influence in checking the elements of chaos and confusion. "Things that I tell my confidant only indirectly", he writes to Nizam-ul-Mulk, "I have laid before you openly, so that there may be no excuse for you."² The centre of Nizam-ul-Mulk's activities had shifted from the north to the south.³ He was not interested in the affairs of the capital where the rivalry of the nobles had surcharged the entire atmosphere with corruption, chicanery, guile and fraud. Shah Waliullah now turned towards the Rohillas.⁴ "It was a force formidable in number,⁵ but

¹ *Siyasi Muktubat*, pp. 80-84.

² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³ Once Nizam-ul-Mulk wanted to take the Mughul ruler to some place outside Delhi, probably the Deccan. Shah Waliullah dissuaded him in these words :

پادشاه را در این جا ماندن بهتر است از برآمدن
از شاهزادگان هر کرا خواهند همراه گیرند

Siyasi Maktubat, pp. 83-84.

The Mughul Emperor was, no doubt, weak and effeminate but his presence in Delhi, under those conditions, had a great political and psychological value.

⁴ For Shah Waliullah's praise of Sayyid Ahmad Rohilla's interest in organizing the Rohilla's armies, see *Siyasi Maktubat*, p. 79.

Some of the best Muslim minds of Hind-Pakistan in the eighteenth century turned towards the Rohillas as the healthiest elements in the social and political life of the Muslims. For Mirza Mazhar Jan Janan's relations with the Rohillas, see *Kalimat-i-Tayyabat*. See also *Insha-i-Madhi*, Haji Muhammad Medhi (MS).

⁵ *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, 51.

it was rendered still more formidable by its military organization and the racial characteristics of the men.¹ The vices which had crept into the Mughul bureaucracy and the soldiery had not affected the Rohillas. Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes about them : "They protected the peasants and traders in their lands from unauthorised oppression and were eager to drive away other robbers from their own lands. In this way they formed an honourable contrast to the Marathas, who extorted their *chauth* and then went away, without recognizing any moral obligation to protect the people whom they had robbed or whose regular government they had overthrown. The Rohilla chieftains left the revenue collection in the hands of Hindu ministers (*diwans*) and their household accounts and correspondence in charge of Hindu secretaries (*munshis*), who were generally very capable men of business and faithfully devoted to their masters' interests. The result was that both rulers and subjects prospered in their dominions."² In addition, their military value was very great. They had kept themselves abreast of the revolution that had taken place in methods of Indian warfare. "Their fire control, disciplined ardour of fight, and active working of individual soldier's intelligence were unrivalled in India in that age."³

This most virile, energetic and disciplined of all Indian political groups was selected by Shah Waliullah to act as the protecting *glacis* against the onrush of disturbing forces. He approached Najib-ud-Daulah, the leader of the Rohillas, to persuade him to do what the Mughul Emperor had not done. In a letter he wrote to Nabji-ud-Daulah : "I clearly see that the regeneration

¹ *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, 51.

² *Ibid.*, 56.

George Forster who travelled through Rohilkhand in 1783 wrote : "The Rohelas by a salutary system of government had enriched their country and had made their names respected.....had made the country populous and opulent." *Journey*, I, 88-99.

³ *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, 53-54.

of the *millat* depends upon you.”¹

Najib-ud-Daulah was a military leader *par excellence*. His instinctive perception of the realities of politics, diplomatic skill and grim determination to battle against heavy odds endeared him to Shah Waliullah who encouraged him,² guided him,³ blessed him⁴ and inspired him. His letters throw valuable light on his relations with the Rohilla chief. In one of these letters, he writes : “There are three groups in India, known for their severity and harshness—as long as these three groups are not extirpated the Emperor will not have peace, nor would the nobles and the people.”⁵ The great scholar-saint played a vital part in maintaining the high morale of the Rohillas and the spirits of Najib-ud-Daulah. In a letter he tells the Rohilla chief that temporary rebuffs should not dishearten him. He should apply himself assiduously and persistently to the work he had undertaken ; “From the creation of Adam to this day there has been no victory which did not have its setbacks.” Then he asks him to keep him informed of the movements of his armies, “So that he may pray to God in the manner that He has prescribed.”⁶ “When Muslim groups betrayed Najib-ud-Daulah and joined the Jats, Najib-ud-Daulah grew pessimistic. Shah Waliullah wrote to him : “If a group from amongst the Muslims has joined the Jats, you need not be worried about it. I think that though apparently the number of of enemies is larger, no harm will come to you.”⁷

Najib-ud-Daulah did all that he could to check the forces of disruption. The atmosphere at court was most uncongenial. The nobles were anxious to grind

¹ *Siyasi Maktubat*, p. 67.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 63, Najib-ud-Daulah sends a message to Shah Waliullah through Shah ‘Abdul ‘Aziz.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

their own axes and to sacrifice the interests of the state at the altar of their ambition. Maratha pressure consequently began to increase in the north.

It was in 1756 that Malhar Rao Holkar and Raghunath Rao came to the north with the purpose of establishing *Hindu-pad-padshahi* in that region. They cleverly secured the friendship of the Jats. The Jat-Maratha alliance was sufficient to cripple the Mughul Empire, but as a matter of further precaution, the Marathas entered into league with certain ambitious nobles at the Mughul court and created a strong front against Najib-ud-Daulah. He was compelled to surrender and to make peace on terms dictated by the Marathas. After this the Marathas turned towards the Panjab. Adina Beg was appointed the governor of the Panjab and Hindu supremacy was established right up to Attock.

Adina Beg died in October, 1758, and the Peshwa now appointed a Maratha, Sabaji Sindhia, to rule over the Panjab. This meant that the Panjab became a part of the expanding Maratha territory.

Shah Waliullah studied the political situation carefully and then decided to invite Ahmad Shah Abdali to India. He wrote a detailed letter to Ahmad Shah, apprised him of the political developments in the country and then requested him to relieve the Muslims from the Maratha domination.¹ This letter is one of the most important historical documents of the eighteenth century.¹

In this letter he gave a brief history of the causes of the weakening of Muslim power in the sub continent. He traces the rise of the Marathas and the Jats. In spite of the vast territories which they had occupied Shah Waliullah was certain that it would not be too difficult to defeat the Marathas and to break their power. The Jats had grown into a power because of the indifference

¹ *Siyasi Maktubat*, pp. 45-53.

and indolence of Muslim officers and could be easily suppressed. He then sums up the plight of the Muslims in these words. "In short the plight of the Muslims is pitiable. All control of the machinery of government is in the hands of the Hindus.....All wealth and prosperity is to be found in their houses while there is nothing for the Muslims but poverty and misery." In the end he exhorts Ahmad Shah Abdali to come to the rescue of the Muslims because it was his duty to do so as the most powerful Muslim monarch in that region. Shah Waliullah was successful in persuading the Afghan monarch to undertake the task of crushing the Marathas and he began to prepare the public for his invasion. In addition, he took all precautions to save Delhi from chaos. He wrote to Najib-ud-Daulah : "When the march of the royal forces takes place through Delhi, you should make all possible arrangements to protect and save the people of Delhi from oppression. The people have been plundered many a time and their honour has been violated.....If you want easy success in your aims, you must see to it that no one amongst the Muslims and the Hindus of Delhi is molested."¹

The Battle of Panipat was a turning point in the history of this sub continent and Shah Waliullah was the chief agent in bringing it about. Discussing the consequences of the Battle of Panipat, Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes : "Since the days of Vishwanath K. Rajwade, it has been the fashion with Maratha writers to belittle the result of the battle of Panipat as no disaster to the Marathas except for the death of so many chiefs and so many thousands of soldiers. Its political consequence is spoken of as nothing and Abdali's victory as a great illusion.....But a dispassionate survey of Indian history will show how chauvinistic this claim is."² As a result

¹ *Siyasi Maktubat*, p. 60.

² *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, 354-55.

of this battle Bihar and Bengal were closed to the Marathas beyond any possibility of conquest. The Panjab was lost for ever to the Marathas. "The ambition and aims of the revived Maratha power in the north were henceforth cooped up within the barren sands of Rajputana and the broken infinitely chequered wilderness of Bundelkhand,.....all Hindu territory and their activities there for the forty years from 1765 to 1805 have left a legacy of hatred for the Maratha name in Rajput hearts, which has not died out."¹

The Battle of Panipat gave the Mughul Empire an opportunity of revitalizing itself, but the rulers, thoroughly incompetent and lethargic as they were, could not rise to the occasion. Though Ahmad Shah Abdali did not intend to stay there, he struck coins at Delhi, then called Shahjahanabad.² Francklin informs us that, while Ahmad Shah was engaged at Anupshahr before the Battle of Panipat, he wrote to Prince 'Ali Guhar offering him the throne. The prince replied that "after the reduction of Bihar and Bengal he would return to take possession of the throne."³ This invitation was repeated after the Battle of Panipat. Ahmad Shah Abdali asked Nawab Zinat Mahal, mother of Shah 'Alam, to persuade Shah 'Alam to return to Delhi. "The King of Kings (*i.e.*, Ahmad Shah)" wrote Zinat Mahal, "has arrived at the Killa. To this day which is the 20th of the month of Rajib (*sic*) I have frequently visited the King of Kings. He expects your arrival and is impatient for it. He has given me great encouragement in assuring me that he remains but for Shah Alam, and his words may be depended upon. My son, be assured that on your coming every thing will be concluded. When I desired the Shah (Durrani) to send some token of favour to Shah Alam, he replied I sent

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 357-58.

² *Punjab Museum Catalogue* by Whitehead, III, 17-18, 35-36.

³ *History of the Reign of Shah 'Alam* by Francklin (Allahabad) (1915), p. 16.

before this a *Sirpache*, etc., but he did not come : to repeat it is not proper. It is better that Shah 'Alam come himself, then I will put his country into his hands and depart."¹

Ahmad Shah wrote to Vansittart to facilitate Shah 'Alam's departure to Delhi. Vansittart wrote to him "If it should be Shahan-Shah's pleasure, he (Shah 'Alam) will be escorted by some (British) troops to Delhi."²

Finally, in the month of May, Vansittart received direct information from a *wazir* of Ahmad Shah Abdali that "*Sikkahs* in the name of Shah 'Alam have been issued at Delhi and other places." The governor wrote to Mir Qasim hoping that the latter will send an order that coins should be minted in Shah 'Alam's name, for, he says, "His Majesty and the commanders are displeased because they have not been issued in Bengal."³

The indolence, short sightedness and lethargy of the Mughul rulers prevented them from taking full advantage of the conditions created by the great saint-scholar. As was natural, the fruits of the Battle of Panipat were reaped by the victors of the Battle of Plassey. Shah Waliullah was fast approaching his end. He expired within a couple of years after the Battle of Panipat.

There can be nothing more unfair to Shah Waliullah than to limit a study of his contribution to his activities in the context of eighteenth century politics. That aspect of his activities connects him with his contemporary world ; but it is in the spirit of his political thought that he belongs to the modern world.⁴ His thought was far ahead of the institutions of his troubled age. Many an essential element in the growth of

¹ This contemporary English translation of the letter which is kept in Imperial Records Department, was first published by Mr. A. F. M. Abdul Ali : *Shuja-ud-Daulah, Nawab Vazir of Oudh* (1754-75), Indian Historical Records Commission, IX, 118.

² From the governor-general to Ahmad Shah Durrani March 26, 1761 *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, I, 79, No. 1042.

³ *Calendar of Persian Correspondence* I, 101, No. 1183.

⁴ A detailed discussion of his political thought is not possible here, in the limited space at our disposal. Only the broad outlines have been indicated.

progressive political thought in the sub continent can be traced back to him. No careful reader of his words can fail to find in his writings the thrill of a new life—a thrill caused by his efforts to awaken the masses from their political stupor and to create a political consciousness in them. He does not approach the kings, the nobles or the governing classes alone to reform the corrupt political institutions ; he asked every section of the population—peasants, artisans, workers, soldiers, scholars, mystics and others—to rise to the occasion and to play their legitimate part in the political sphere. He exhorts them to develop faith in their destiny and to be conscious of their potential contribution in revitalising political institutions. His writings could quicken democratic urges in the east. He had no faith in monarchies, and, although living in an age of monarchical governments, he had the courage to expose their defects in the boldest relief. He bracketed the Mughul government of the eighteenth century with those exploiting and corrupt governments of the Romans and the Sassanids¹ which reduced the working classes to the level of beasts and animals by increasing the incidence of taxation on them. His was, indeed, the first voice that was raised in Hind-Pakistan in the eighteenth century in support of the workers, the artisans and the peasants.

Shah Waliullah was absolutely clear in his mind about the type of political organisation that should be established in this world in order to eliminate its miseries. The warp and woof of his political thought was supplied by the *Khilafat-i-Rashidah*. He had studied it both as the basis of the *Islamic Shari'at*,² as well as the exponent of the Islamic political ideals. He went deep into the meaning and significance as well as the historical role and religious importance of the *Khilafat* and then formulated his political thought and ideology. While describing the extension

¹ *Hujjat-ullah-il Balighah*, I, 119.

² *Izalat-ul-Khifa*, p. 5.

of Muslim political power in non-Muslim lands during the *Khilafat-i-Rashidah* he has made very significant observations about the way in which Muslim political and social life should be organized in such lands.¹ It was the deepest longing of his soul to see the spirit of the early socio-political organization of Islam working as an operative principle in human life. But his eagerness for the revival of the early traditions of Islam did not affect his faith in the essentially dynamic character of human society. He was all for *ijtihad*, and wanted the spirit of the *Khilafat-i-Rashidah*, to be imbibed *in toto* but to be *applied according to the needs* of the time. Analysing Shah Waliullah's political thought Iqbal writes : "The prophetic method of teaching, according to Shah Waliullah, is that, generally speaking, the habits, ways and peculiarities of the people to whom he is specially sent. The prophet who aims at all-embracing principles, however, can neither reveal different principles for different peoples nor leave them to work out their own rules of conduct. His method is to train one particular people and to use it as a nucleus for the building up a universal *Shariat*. In doing so he accentuates the principles underlying the social life of all mankind and applies them to concrete cases in the light of the specific habits of the people immediately before him. The *Shari'at* values (*ahkam*) resulting from his application (for instance the rules relating to penalties for crimes) are in a sense specific to that people; and their observance is not an end in itself. They cannot be strictly enforced in the case of future generations."² It was with this basic conviction that he wanted the spirit of the *Khilafat-i-Rashidah* to be adopted and applied according to the requirements of the age.

Following the *Qura'nic* method of building up a healthy society,¹ Shah Waliullah laid great stress on a

¹ *Izalat-ul-Khifa*, pp. 122-158.

² *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 171-172.

proper organization of family life. His discussions on this subject,² show a remarkable vitality of ideas and open fresh avenues for social and economic studies. He firmly believed that the character of the political institutions of a country was ultimately determined by the type of family life that it developed. Perhaps no medieval scholar of this sub continent ever understood so clearly the various problems of civic life as Shah Waliullah. He considered 'civil-consciousness' to be a pre-requisite for the development of 'political consciousness'. It was, according to him, the life-breath of a healthy society, its very *sine qua non*. In his *Budur-ul-Bazighah* and *Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah* he has dealt at length with the factors which lead to the growth of civil consciousness as well as the tendencies which contribute to its disintegration and ruin.³

Alone among Muslim writers of the eighteenth century, Shah Waliullah evaluated the importance of economic factors in social and political life. He believed economic equilibrium (*tawazun*) to be indispensable for the stability of social and political order. Accumulation of wealth in the hands of a particular class leads to social chaos.⁴ The concentration of people on a particular profession to the exclusion of others disturbs the basis of economic relationship.⁵ An excessive burden of taxation on the revenue producing classes—peasants, merchants, artisans—ruins a polity.⁶ What principles then should determine the incidence of taxation? How should unemployment be averted? How should vocational distribution take place? These and similar questions have been raised and answered by

¹ *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 165-66.

² See Chapter XVIII of *Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah* dealing with *الارتقاقات* I, 66, *et seq.*

³ See *Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah*, I, 79-80; II, 375-408. See also *Budur-ul-Bazighah*, Chapter XI.

⁴ *Siyasi Makrubat*, p. 70.

⁵ *Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah*, I, 78-85.

⁶ *Ib id.*, p. 199.

Shah Waliullah with remarkable clarity. His emphasis on the importance of economic factors in social life should not lead a reader to think that the great scholar analysed man and his experience in this world only with reference to his economic problems and urges. Shah Waliullah subordinated all values to the moral and spiritual needs of man, but gave to economic factors their proper place in human affairs.

Apart from this, what strikes a student of Shah Waliullah's political thought most is the originality of his approach and the clarity of his exposition in dealing with political and social problems. He has neither moulded his ideas in the set concepts of a theological system nor has he used the terminology of a practically dead metaphysics. He seems to have clearly realised the spirit of the generations that were to follow him and it is for this reason that his exposition of the social and political problems makes the deepest appeal to the modern mind. What has infinitely enhanced the value of his writings in the socio-political life of modern Islam is his thorough assimilation of the traditions of early Islam as well as a determination to reconstruct the future in the light of the problems of the new world. "The task before the modern Muslim" writes Iqbal, "is.....immense. He has to rethink the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past. *Perhaps the first Muslim who felt the urge of new spirit in him is Shah Waliullah of Delhi.*"¹

Shah Waliullah's movement for the political and spiritual regeneration of the Hind-Pak Muslims did not die with him. His message went on echoing through the corridors of time and inspired generation after generation. There is a long distance, both in space and time, between the Battle of Panipat and the Battle of Balakot,¹ but when all the forces simmering beneath the surface are clearly analysed, the same mind seems

¹ *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 97. Italics are not Iqbal's.

to be working behind them everywhere. Shah Waliullah's able and gifted descendants kept the torch of their master's thought burning and incessantly strove, day and night to bring about moral regeneration and to awaken political consciousness in the masses. The immediate objective of his successors changed with the change in the political climate, but the ultimate goal remained the same. Shah Waliullah's immediate problem was the rising tide of the Maratha and Jat aggressions. Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz and Sayyid Ahmad Shahid were called upon to deal with the Sikhs and the British. As Shah Waliullah's opposition to the Maratha movement was not an end in itself so also his descendants did not deem a struggle with the Sikhs as an end itself. It was a means to the creation of a favourable atmosphere for founding an ideal homeland for the Muslims in which the spirit of the *Khilafat-i-Rashidah* lives and works. The tragedy of Balakot did not freeze the Muslim longing for the establishment of a truly Islamic state which had been the *leit-motif* to Shah Waliullah's political struggle. Under different conditions this desire expressed itself in different ways.

Shah Waliullah gave a new orientation to the cramped and narrow outlook of the theologians. He brought them out from their class-rooms into the open world and taught them to influence the main currents of life by preaching and propagating the dynamic principles of religion. There is hardly any Muslim religious institution in Hind-Pakistan today which is not directly or indirectly influenced by Shah Waliullah or his descendants.

Shah Waliullah's influence is clearly visible in the intellectual as well as in the political life of his followers. He had clearly laid down the lines on which his movement had to be carried on in both the religious and the political spheres. His descendants analysed and

¹ For details see *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, Ghulam Rasul Mithr*, II, 368-417.

interpreted their master's thought in a remarkable manner. Conscious of the motive which had led Shah Waliullah to translate the *Qur'an* into Persian, his two sons—Shah 'Abdul Qadir and Shah Rafi'-ud-din—translated it into Urdu. Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz elaborated his father's thought with reference to certain problems of exegesis in his *Fath-ul-'Aziz* which is a valuable aid to the understanding of *Fath-ur-Rahman*. His *Tuhfah-i-Asna-i-'Ashariyah* deals with the same topic as the *Izalat-ul-Khifa* which is the best authority in the whole range of Muslim literature on the orthodox caliphate and the principles on which it stood and thrived. Maulana Rafi'-ud-din's booklets on *Asrar-ul-Muhabbat* and *Takmil-ul-Azhan* elucidate in one way or the other the thought of Shah Waliullah. Maulana Isma'il Shahid's *Abaqat* is an attempt to justify Shah Waliullah's standpoint with reference to the controversy regarding the validity of the doctrines of *wahdat-ul-wujud* (unity of the noumenal and the phenomenal world) and the *wahadat-ush-shuhud* (unity of the phenomenal world). The *Taqwiyat-ul-Iman* of Maulana Shahid has been developed on the lines of Shah Waliullah's *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin*. In fact Muslim thought of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries is inexplicable without reference to Shah Waliullah.

In the political sphere, the consciousness which Shah Waliullah had awakened inspired the lives of his descendants. Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz continued his work under different circumstances but with the same zeal. His attitude towards the British government—which had firmly established itself during his lifetime—may be estimated from the fact that he was the first Muslim scholar who declared all those regions which were under British occupation as *Dar-ul-Harb*.¹ The significance of this declaration (*fātwa*) may be appreciated only when the implications are kept in mind. It was the

¹ *Fatwa-i-Azizi*, 16, 17, 185, Mujtabai Press, Delhi. Also *Malfuzat-i-Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz*, p. 58.

first firm expression of Muslim determination to shake off the foreign yoke. In the years that followed, British imperialism spread its tentacles in the country and its atrocities, during and after the movement of 1857, obscured this *fatwa*, from the public mind, but none can deny that when the movement for the liberation of this sub continent was started the people derived a great moral and spiritual strength from it. The historian cannot fail to discover Shah Waliullah's great influence in the history of Muslim renaissance in the sub continent.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE REFORM MOVEMENT IN BENGAL

In the rural areas of the sub continent, the uneducated Muslims had adopted many pagan rites and beliefs. This was particularly true of Bengal, where the Muslims, although a majority, were removed from the religious and cultural centres of 'Hindustan' and were consequently more susceptible to the cultural influence of their neighbours. Considerable sections of the Muslim population of Bengal, being converts from Hinduism, retained, after their incomplete conversion, their love for local cults and deities. Some of them continued to cultivate the snake cult of *Manasa*, the tiger cults of Dakshin Ray and the pox cult of *Sitala* with the same enthusiasm and attachment as their ancestors and neighbours, with one difference, however, that they now often gave to the old deities new names.¹ It seems that even the cult of Siva, was practised among some Muslims. The poet Alaol wrote his *Padmavati*, in the strain of a devout Hindu and was profuse in the eulogies of Siva. The Muslim heroine of Karimullah's *Yamini Vahal* is represented as praying to the god Siva and in another work *Imam Yattrar Puthi* the same author addresses a hymn to Saraswati, the goddess of learning. Karam 'Ali, another leading poet of Chittagong, was on the other hand a powerful exponent of the *Radha-Krishna* cult and Aftab-ud-din, the author of *Jamil Dilaram* sent his hero to the nether world to seek a boon from the *saptarishis* or the seven sages of the Hindu mythology. The poets in all probability adopted this device for creating the proper mythological background for their poems or they had to keep in view

¹ See D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature* 762-63; J. C. Ghose: *Bengali Literature*, p. 17; *Sakitya Parishat Patrika*, 1939, pp. 209-230.

the taste of their Hindu patrons. This in itself need not have created a non-Islamic feeling among the Muslims. The main source of ignorance about Islam and its teachings however, was the lack of proper religious education among many sections of the masses. The standard of education even among the *qazis*, according to Dr. Buchanan's¹ findings, extremely unsatisfactory. But, however ill educated, these *qazis* continued to exercise an effective check on the extravagant and superstitious beliefs and practices of the masses. After the passing of the *diwani* into the hands of the East India Company, the *qazis* were gradually stripped of their duties as religious instructors and judges. With the imposition of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal a Hindu landed aristocracy was foisted upon the Muslim peasants. Their influence and power further aggravated the situation. Soon popular religion sank into rank superstition. Many a religious practice and observance, adapting itself to the local traditions, lost its original nature and significance and was practised in a way little conforming to and even at variance with the spirit of the *Qu'ran*.

Among the causes of this ignorance was a strong prejudice against the translation of the *Qu'ran* and a general dearth of religious books in Bengali. The first Bengali translation of the *Qu'ran* was published in 1886 and is the work of a Hindu scholar G. C. Sen.

In Bengal Islam was preached by a handful of courageous and selfless saints. After their death, these holy men of Islam were deeply venerated. In many instances the common folk adopted such un-Islamic practices as gave this veneration a semblance of saint-worship. Their tombs and shrines were visited by people in distress or in fulfilment of vows or to earn religious merit. They sought the fulfilment of every conceivable earthly desire; they would ask for children, health and fortune; they would try to propitiate the saints by offerings and vows.

¹ *Eastern India*, I, 134; II, 431-32, 446 and 724 and III, p. 512.

In view of the veneration shown to the dead saints, it is understandable that the living *pirs* should also be highly respected. Too often this respect degenerated into a superstitious belief in the miraculous powers of the *pir*. It was deemed essential for salvation that one should be a *murid* of some *pir*.

In this favourable environment there sprang up besides the regular *sufi* orders to be found elsewhere, numerous heterodox fraternities.¹ Some of them had little respect for Islamic teachings.

There was, however, one redeeming feature in this sombre picture of Muslim society. Fast losing real power in other parts of India and suicidally engaged in personal bickerings, the Muslims, even in the days of the gradual disintegration of the Mughul Empire, enjoyed in Bengal economic prosperity and political supremacy. Basking in the sunshine of a false security, they had no premonition of the hardships which they were destined to face within a few decades. When, therefore, the era of bondage began with the defeat of Siraj-ud-Daulah at Plassey on the fateful evening of June 23, 1757, the Muslims were hardly prepared for an economic system that would crush them completely. The Permanent Settlement of Lord Cornwallis¹ elevated the Hindu tax farmers to the position of landholders and gave them proprietary rights over the soil which transferred to them wealth that would normally have gone to the Muslims. The government adopted a policy of political discrimination. It first removed Muslims from all posts of trust and authority and in course of time debarred them from all government employment, replacing them by Britishers or Hindus. Various avenues of trade and commerce, economic prosperity and political power were closed to them, "The whole community sank with the Empire."

It took the Muslims more than half a century to have any realisation of their debasement into an educationally

¹ See *Eastern India, op. cit.*, II, 109.

² For the economic and political policy pursued by the English at the time towards the Muslims, see W. W. Hunters, *Our Indian Muslims*, Chapter IV.

backward, culturally demoralised, religiously degenerate and politically frustrated community. It was Haji Shari'atullah who roused the Muslims of lower and eastern Bengal to conscious self-assertion. We have little knowledge about the early life of Haji Shari'atullah beyond the information that, born of obscure parents in *parganah* Bandarkhola, district Faridpur, he went to Mecca when he was only eighteen.¹ According to one report² he studied with al-Shaikh Tahir as-Sanbal al-Makki and returned to his country after an absence of twenty years.

Shari'atullah came back to Bengal in the early years of the nineteenth century.³ It is said that during his long stay in Mecca Shari'atullah was influenced by the Wahhabis who, during his stay in the holy cities, were carrying on in Arabia a vigorous crusade against all deviations from early Islam. There is, however, no evidence to show that Shari'atullah ever had any contact with the Wahhabis or accepted in full any of their doctrines. On the contrary, he was a pupil of such Mecca divines as had already denounced the Wahhabis as heretics. Shari'atullah would therefore be averse to the teachings of Shaikh Muhammad *ibn* 'Abd-ul-Wahhab. But the possibility remains that the reformist elements in Wahhabism might have caught his imagination and inspired him to launch reforms, on more or less similar lines, in his native country.

Shari'atullah started his movement among the most depressed classes of the Muslims, the peasants and the artisans towards whom even their comparatively fortunate coreligionists were indifferent. He was convinced

¹ *JASB*, LXIII, *op cit.*, p. 49.

² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II, 47.

³ The authorities put the date of his return variously in 1802, 1822 and 1828—some suggest that he visited twice and finally returned to Bengal (1828).

If the first date, 1802, is accepted, any possibility of Shari'atullah's coming into contact with the Wahhabis, who entered Mecca for the first time in 1803, is to be precluded. If, on the other hand, the second date, 1820 is accepted, the Faraizi movement become junior to the reform movement led by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid Bareilvi, an opinion Dr. J. Wise, himself does not hold, Taylor's theory of two visits, too, in the absence of satisfactory evidence, remains doubtful.

that the best way to reform these unfortunate Muslims who were suffering from various complexes and were scarcely aware of their rights and responsibilities as Muslims was to live with them as one of them. With sympathy and understanding he soon won over the hearts of the poor *ryots* who readily responded to his call to give up customs and practices which were un-Islamic in character and began to act upon the commandments of religion called *faraiz* or duties.¹ Hence his followers came to be known as *Faraizis*.

It was with religious and social questions that Shari'atullah was primarily concerned and during his life time the movement remain basically a religious movement.² According to Taylor "They (the *Faraizis*) profess to adhere to the strict letter of Koran and reject all ceremonies that are not sanctioned by it.....the commemoration of the martyrdom of Hasan and Husain.....is not only forbidden but even witnessing the ceremonies connected with it, is avoided by them. They reject the rites of *Putteo*, *Chuttee* and *Chilla* which are performed between the first and fortieth day after the birth of a child and observe the rite of '*Aqiqa*.In the same way they have divested the marriage ceremony of its formalities.....The funeral obsequies are conducted with a corresponding degree of simplicity, offerings of fruits and flowers at the grave and the various *fatiha* ceremonies being prohibited ; their graves are not raised above the surface of the ground nor marked by any building or brick or stone. The *Ferazees* have the character of being stricter in their morals than their Muhammadan brethren, but they are inclined to intolerance and persecution, and in showing their contempt of the religious opinions

¹ Karamat 'Ali *Nasim-ul-Haramynm* I, 160.

² An account of the *Faraizis* of the time given by James Lay or, a surgeon in Dacca for eight years, in his '*A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca*', submitted to the government" in compliance with the requisition addressed to Medical Officers to furnish reports on the "topography and statistics of their respective districts and stations" is at once authoritative and revealing, coming as it does, from an impartial and contemporary source.

of their neighbours, they frequently occasion affrays and disturbances in their town."¹

With a view to encouraging his followers to develop their own personality Haji Shari'atullah prohibited the use of the title *pir* and *murid*, terms which suggested complete submission and too much reliance by the *murid* on the *pir* and preferred to be called *ustad* or teacher, laying stress thereby on the importance of training and discipline. He forbade the *bi'at*, which was customary at the initiation of a disciple, but insisted upon a *taubah*, repentance, and resolve to lead pious life. Exaggerated veneration to either the living *pir* or the dead saint was strictly forbidden and the performance of Hindu rites and participation in Hindu religious ceremonies were stopped. Muslims were carefully led to appreciate their position as Muslims.²

To impress upon the minds of his followers that the English were now the rulers of the country and that they were living in a *dar-ul-harb* Shari'atullah declared that no 'Id or Friday congregational prayer could be said in Bengali. But unlike Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, Shari'atullah does not appear to have formulated any revolutionary principle about *jihad* or to have preached any direct action against the English rulers.³

A different type of person was Haji Shari'atullah's son Muhammad Muhsin, better known as Dudhu Miyan who, after the death of his father, assumed the leadership of the *Faraizis*. Under his vigorous and more enterprising leadership the *Faraizis* developed into a highly organized and well knit group at the head of which presided Dudhu Miyan himself, now styled *pir*, a deviation from the teachings of his father. Dudhu Miyan partitioned eastern Bengal into circles and appointed an agent

¹ Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 248-250. For Puttee Chuttee, etc., see *Qanun*, *op. cit.*, Chapter III.

² Karamat 'Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qawl'ah*, p. 50 ; *Nasim op. cit.*, pp. 154-16 ; Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 248 ; *JASB*, LXIII, *op. cit.*, 48-49.

³ *Hujjat op. cit.* pp. 43-8. *Nasim, op. cit.*, p. 165 ; *JASB*, LXIII, *op. cit.*, 48 ; Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government, XLII, 141.

to each, whose duties were to make proselytes, consolidate the movement in their respective areas and to collect funds for the furtherance of the objects of the movement. He soon showed exceptional qualities of leadership and acquired a great influence among the Muslim peasants and craftsman of Bakerganj, Dacca, Faridpur and Pabna districts, whose cause he championed with all the resources under his command. He laid great stress on complete brotherhood and equality among the members of the movement and taught them that when a brother was in distress it was the duty of his neighbours to assist him. Bound by fellowship, the Faraizis were required by their redoubtable leader to refer every complaint and dispute to him for settlement and arbitration, and they were sternly prohibited from taking resort to British courts of justice. The *pir* would then himself administer summary justice and his orders would be carried to remote villages.¹

“ It was against the levying of illegal cesses by landlords that Dudhu Miyan made his most determined stand. That a Muhammadan *ryot* should be obliged to contribute towards the decoration of the image of Durga or towards the support of any of the idolatrous rites of his Hindu landlord were intolerable acts of oppression... he advances a step further when he proclaimed that the earth is God's and that no one has a right to occupy it as an inheritance or levy taxes upon it. The peasantry was therefore persuaded to settle on *Khas Mahal* lands, managed directly by the Government and thus escape the payment of any taxes but those raised by the state.”²

The *zamindars* and the indigo planters were alarmed at the spread of the movement which, if successful, would spell danger to their influence and power. They; therefore, sternly warned their tenants against joining the reformers and skilfully played on their social prejudices

¹ *JASB*, LXIII, *op. cit.*, p. 50, *Nasim*, 160-161 ; *E I*, *op. cit.*, p. 58 ; *SRBG.*, *op. cit.*, p. 141 ; *Eastern Bengal District Gazetteer*, Rajshahi, p. 62.

² *JASB*, LXIII, p. 50.

in order to bias them against the teachings of the *Faraizis* and tortured and punished any recalcitrant tenant who dared disobey their warning. Coercion failed, however, and it only added to the zeal and determination of the tenants who, in the teachings of Dudhu Miyan, saw a new light of hope. All this time Dudhu Miyan, did not remain inactive on his part, but exerted every possible influence to coax or coerce the Muslims to join him. This led to a direct clash of interest between the *zamindars* and the indigo planters on the one hand and Dudhu Miyan on the other. In an effort to arrest the progress of the movement many false suits were brought against Dudhu Miyan and the landlords were given ready help and assistance by a group of Muslims to whom the religious aspects of the movement was disquietening. After many an early setback and failure since 1836, the concerted action of this group succeeded in getting him confined in the Alipur jail as a state prisoner,¹ thus dealing a death blow to the movement. Thus ended the creative and active period of the *Faraizi* movement and under weak and unimaginative leadership the *Faraizis* gradually degenerated into a sect, content to maintain their religious peculiarities rather than to work for the social, cultural and economic emancipation of fellow Muslims.

Another contemporary reform movement, remarkable not so much for its religious doctrines—for the promoters of the movement are reported to be the disciples of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid—as for the determined peasant rising to which it transformed itself before its final collapse on November 19, 1831, at the hands of the united force of Mr. Alexander, Joint Magistrate of Barasat and Major Scott Harding,² was led by Mir Nisar 'Ali, known to fame as Titu Mir. It

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 81-82.

² See Bengal Judicial Constitution (Lower Provinces), Nov. 22, 1831.

spread over a few adjoining *thanahs* in two districts of Bengal, Nadia and 24 parganahs.

The two official accounts of the rising prepared separately by Colvin¹ and Alexander² and admittedly based on local information give conflicting reports about the early life, education and training of Titu Mir. The account given by his Bengali biographer is also unsatisfactory.³ Strangely enough the biographers of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, some of whom⁴ furnish us with a long list of his distinguished disciples, are inexplicably silent on Titu Mir and his uprising. From these unsatisfactory and inconclusive reports may, however, be gleaned the information that Titu Mir, a man of small education but of great personal courage and bravery met the Sayyid most probably in Calcutta when the latter visited the town in 1821-22 on his way to Mecca and became his disciple. He was, moreover, considerably influenced by one Miskin Shah who joined him at Bahadurpur at an early date but about whose learning or origin little is known.

Titu Mir, in conformity with the tenets of Sayyid Ahmad, denounced the ceremonies of *Muharrâm*, the rites performed at stated periods after death and the customary offerings at the tombs of the saints.

The peculiarities of the party involved them in differences and altercations with their neighbours. Their intolerance of laxity in religious observance, especially prayer, fasting and *zakat*, was in itself a course of friction and they had little hesitation in giving offence by proclaiming their contempt for the prevalent opinions and prejudices. They did not, however, carry their disputes beyond words, nor did they exceed the limits

¹ Board's Collections (India Office Library, London, MS.), Vol. 1361, Collection 54222.

² Board's Collections, 1542, Collection 61232.

³ See the monthly *Muhammadi*, Vol. XXV, of a series of articles under the title Shahid Titu Mir by Dr. Abdul Ghafur Siddiqi.

⁴ Namely, Munshi Ja'far Thanasari in his *Sawanih-i-Ahmadi* and Sayyid 'Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadvi in his *Sirat Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*.

except in a few villages. On one or two such occasions, complaints were brought before Hindu *zamindars*.

It was to be expected that such complaints should be readily received, for the *zamindars* could hardly be disposed to favour people "who may be believed in the warmth of their new zeal to have failed in a little of their usual respect to their infidel superiors". There was, besides this, the more certain inducement to interfere in the dispute furnished by the hope of profiting by it. Accordingly Ram Narayan, the *Zamindar* of Tara-
gooni, Kishen Dev Roy of Purwa and others of the neighbourhood began to persecute the reformists. They imposed a heavy and humiliating tax on beards.¹ They subjected the members of the group "by their fraudulent and oppressive use of power of summary arrest for arrears of rent, authorised under the provision of the Regulation 7, 1799," to different kinds of maltreatment.² A case was filed at the court of the Joint Magistrate of Barasat against the highhanded oppression of the *zamindars* as early as August, 7, 1830. The persecution by the *zamindars* however continued unabated and the illegal 'beard tax' continued to be collected by the tax-gatherers of Kishen Dev Roy in the village of Purwa. The neighbouring village, Sarfarazpur, however, refused to pay the humiliating tax, upon which the *zamindars* entered the village with a large number of his people and a "riot ensued in which several houses were plundered and a mosque was burnt." A complaint was immediately lodged by the reformists at the Bashirhat police station. But the Hindu *darughah* colluded with the Hindu party and drew up the final report on the case so as to favour the *zamindars*. The followers of Titu Mir, unsuccessfully, petitioned the magistrate on 15 July and again on 29 July, 1831 complaining against the conduct of the *darughah*; and the *zamindar* came out of the case triumphant, his right of oppression apparently vindicated.

¹ This was called a "Beard Tax" and was charged at the rate of Rs. 2/8 per beard which in terms of contemporary purchasing power was very high.

² Bengal Judicial Consultation, April 13, 1832.

In the following September, an unsuccessful effort was made to lodge an appeal and Ghulam Ma'sum, Titu Mir's deputy who went to Calcutta for the purpose, came back disappointed. Thus being repeatedly frustrated in their attempt to have their grievances redressed by legal and peaceful means, the reformists resolved to take justice in their own hands. Once resolved they started gathering at Narkulbaria in the house of Mu'izz-ud-din Biswas, a wealthy farmer of the village, and there they built huts surrounded by a bamboo stockade and stored up supplies of rice and other provisions. By the beginning of November they had made sufficiently clear their intention to defile Hindu temples as a reprisal for the burning of their mosque and to punish the *darughah* who had ruined their case. They successively attacked Purwa, the village of the *zamindar* Kishen Dev Roy and Lawghata, that of his brother Debnath Roy. At these villages they committed no excess beyond killing cows in market places, defiling Hindu temples with cow-blood and ill-treating one or two Hindus. At the latter place however Debnath Roy was killed in the affray that took place between him and the reformists. Encouraged by their success and confident of their strength the reformists, their numbers now increasing, attacked other villages in the pattern already set at Purwa and reportedly proclaimed that "the period of British rule had expired and that the Muhammadans from whom the English had usurped it were rightful owners of the Empire." The Muslims were asked to accept their teachings, the tenants were told to furnish them foodgrains and parties were sent out in search of the corrupt *darughah*.

Intelligence reports of the happenings were regularly sent to Bashirhat Thanah by Kishen Dev Roy but the local police authorities at first made light of these developments. The European factors in the neighbourhood became alarmed, however, and at the instance of Piron, Superintendent of Baraguri factory, reinforcements from

the neighbouring police stations were ordered to Bashirhat. Another factor, Storm, addressed the government on the subject on November 13, 1831 and the following afternoon Alexander, Joint Magistrate of Bashirhat, moved out to apprehend the reformists. At Narkulbarai he faced a determined group of people armed with clubs, swords and spears, "prepared to make any possible resistance". A skirmish ensued, and the police were completely beaten. Alexander fled, hotly pursued by the peasants, leaving behind one *jemadar*, one *havildar*, ten sepoys and three *barkandzes* killed and many including the *darughah* of Bashirhat, wounded.¹

Elated by this success Titu Mir proceeded to destroy the Baraguri factory and punish its Superintendent for his part in the attack led by Alexander. Another factory, belonging to the same concern was next attacked and its superintendent, along with his family, was brought before Titu Mir as captive. Superintendent Blond was, however, set free after he promised his allegiance to Titu Mir and agreed to make indigo for the reformists.

Alexander, in the meantime, hurried to Calcutta to report to the government and reached there on November 16. Considering the gravity and urgency of the situation, a regiment of N. I. was ordered out immediately.¹ Before the troops from Calcutta could arrive, a second attempt to suppress the reformists made by the magistrate of Kishnagar had also failed.² On November 19, 1831 the combined action of Alexander and Major Scott Harding at the head of a regiment of N.I., some troops of Horse Artillery, with a couple of guns and some troopers of Body Guard began. The reformists came out of the uncertain safety of their bamboo stockade and met the enemy in the open plain. A stubborn engagement decided the day. They were defeated with heavy losses. The leader with some 50 followers fell in the action. Their dead bodies were burnt and houses looted.

¹ See also Criminal Consultations, Nov. 22, 1831, Proceedings of the Hon'ble President-in-Council Military Department, Nov. 16, 1831.

² See also Criminal Consultations, Nov. 22, 1831.

This was followed by an indiscriminate seizure of all those suspected of sympathy with the movement. One hundred and ninety-seven persons from among those were subsequently prosecuted in five different trials before the *Nizamat Adalat*. The court sentenced Ghulam Mas'um to death, transported for life eleven and convicted one hundred and twenty-eight others to various terms of imprisonment. Of the rest four died while on trial and fifty-three were either acquitted or released.¹

It is difficult to attribute any 'settled design' to Titu Mir or to suggest that "the capture of Peshawar in 1830 by the Fanatic Hosts emboldened Titu Miyan to throw off all disguise, and the petty oppression to which the Hindu landlords subjected his followers, placed him at the head of an infuriated peasant rising" the object of which was to overthrow the Company's rule."² Sayyid Ahmad Shahid had strong reasons to avoid, while engaged in fighting with the Sikhs, any possibility of a direct clash with the English. It is, therefore, improbable that he would give his consent to the supposed project of this uprising, thus jeopardising the supply of men and money to the main theatre of action from the British occupied provinces. If, therefore, Titu Mir had any intention to overthrow the government, he nursed the idea himself, keeping it a secret from his leader. It is, however, incompatible with common sense to speak of the deliberate pursuance of a settled design." Titu Miyan, when persecuted by the *zamindars*, instead of "throwing off all disguise" meekly filed a petition at the court of the joint magistrate of Barasat and was, as late as 25 September, 1831, still hoping for redress of grievances by peaceful means. Only after the expiry of six months and the catastrophe of the first magnitude that befell the whole movement in the defeat

¹ See also Board's Collections, Vol. 1542, op. cit. pp. 3-7, Bengal Judicial Consultations, August 5, 1833, No. ii.

² The view has been put forward by W. W. Hunter, E. Rehatsek and the author of *The Wahhabis in India* in *Calcutta Review*, op. cit.

and death of Sayyid Ahmad at Balakot, did he think it opportune to rise against the government. Another contention is that faced with the unfavourable circumstances created by the disaster of Balakot, Titu Mir had to make a premature rising against the government. This also is not borne out by facts. The killing of cows, the defiling of Hindu temples, the attacks on Hindu villages and the murder of the offending *darughah* all point to the intense feeling of revenge and reprisal that motivated his actions. The reformists during this short-lived rising showed remarkable determination and courage. The movement Sayyid Ahmad Shahid which was far more important than the movements of Shari'atullah and Titu Mir has been discussed elsewhere.

We shall here simply take note of the fact that Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's lieutenants, Mulana Wilayat 'Ali and 'Inayat 'Ali, spread the movement in the districts of Rajshahi, Malda and 24 parganahs, Maulana Karmat Ali, in Barisal, Faridpur and Tippera, Maulana 'Imam-ud-din in Chittagong and Noakhali, Maulana 'Abdullah in Dacca. With the help of the press and platform they made the Bengalis better Muslims and created a political consciousness among them.

CHAPTER XIX

SAYYID AHMAD SHAHID (I)

Life and Teachings

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was the founder of that religio-political movement which is generally known as Indian Wahhabism, although his teachings differed considerably from those of Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahhab of Najd, from whom Wahhabism derived its name. It is true that the vast majority of Hind-Pak Muslims never formally adopted the teachings of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, but indirectly they have been much influenced by them. Apart from what they did in the purely religious field for more than half a century the so-called Wahhabis of the sub continent were most active politically. First they boldly challenged the authority of the Sikhs, and then of the British. It is of importance, therefore, to trace the early history and examine the teachings of the man who founded and organized this movement.

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was born in (1201 A. H. 1786 A.D.) in Rai-Bareli, a small town situated at a distance of forty-nine miles from Lucknow. As to the exact date there is a difference of opinion among his biographers. According to one version he was born on 1 *Muharram*¹; but according to certain other works the date of birth falls in the month of *Safar*² which

¹ Muhammad Ja'far Thanewari, *Tawarikh-i-'Ajibah* (second edition), p. 3. This was the biography of the Sayyid which was until recently widely read. *Muharram*, 1201, came to be readily accepted as the true date because it appealed to the imagination of men that the great reformer of the age was born on the very first day of the century.

² Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Sirat-i-Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, (second edition), p. 45, and Ghulam Rasul Mihr, *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, I, 56. The latter work gives 6 of *Safar* as the date. A reliable contemporary source, *Tarikh-i-Ahmad-ud-din* by Maulvi Sayyid Jafar Ali Naqvi, mentions the month of *Safar*, but no date. (Punjab University MS. folio 15).

seems to be the more reliable version. All are, however, agreed on the year.

Among the Sayyid's forefathers were many eminent soldiers and men of learning and piety. It was during the reign of Sultan Qutb-ud-din Aibak that Sayyid Qutb-ud-din Muhammad, a scion of this Hasani Sayyid family, appeared on the Indian scene and after a period of adventures settled down in Kara. After several generations the family moved to Nasirabad, not far from Rai-Bareli.

Finally Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's forefathers established themselves on the banks of the river Sai at Rai-Bareli. Here his great-great-grandfather namely Sayyid Shah 'Ismullah built his famous *da'irah* which later came to be known as *takiyah*. It was here that Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was born. His father was Sayyid Muhammad 'Irfan and mother Bibi 'Afiah, daughter of Sayyid Abu Said.¹

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid possessed a most attractive personality. He was handsome, fairly tall and well-built. His complexion was pleasing to the eye. He had a great slab of a fore head and dreaming brown eyes.

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid possessed in a marked degree qualities essential for the leadership of the Muslims of the sub continent and he was no doubt destined to leave a permanent mark on the history of Indian Islam. But he was not a scholar in the ordinary sense of the term. The class room had little attraction for him. It is 'stated that when in accordance with the practice in vogue

¹ The geneological table is as follows : Sayyid Ahmad (1) Sayyid Muhammad 'Irfan (2) Sayyid Muhammad Nur (3) Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi (4) Sayyid Muhammad 'Ism-ullah (5) Sayyid Muhammad Fazil (6) Sayyid Muhammad Mua'zzam (7) Sayyid Ahmad (8) Sayyid Muhammad (9) Sayyid 'Ala-ud-din (10) Sayid Qutub-ud-din (11) Sayyid Sadr-ud-din (12) Sayyid Zain-ud-din (13) Sayyid Ahmad (14) Sayyid 'Ali (15) Sayyid Qa'im-ud-din (16) Sayyid Sadr-ud-din (17) Sayyid Rukn-ud-din (18) Sayyid Nizam-ud-din (19) Sayyid Qutb-ud-din Muhammad of Kara (20) Sayyid Rashid-ud-din Ahmad (21) Sayyid Yusuf (22) Sayyid 'Isa (23) Sayyid Hasan (24) Sayyid Husain (known as Abul Hasan) (25) Sayyid Ja'far (26) Sayyid Qasim (27) Abu Muhammad ' Abdullah (28) Hasan-al-Anwar al-Jawwad (29) Sayyid Muhammad II. (30) Abu Muhammad ' Abdulla al-Ashtar (31) Abu Muhammad (32) 'Abdullah Mahdi (33) Hasan Musanna (43) Hazrat Imam Hasan (35) Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Fatimah.

For the geneological tree and other information on the early life of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid see Sayyid Jafar Ali Naqvi's (Punjab University MS.), *Tarikh-i-Ahmediyyah* and Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali's *Makhzan-i-Ahmadi*.

among the Muslims, his formal education began at the age of four years, four months and four days, he showed little interest in reading and writing. He spent nearly three years at school but during the three years that he spent in the *maktab*, in spite of the best efforts of the teacher and the concern shown by his elders, he hardly learnt anything except to write a few simple words and to learn a few *surahs* of the *Qur'an* by heart. His elder brothers were keen on his education but neither their persuasion nor admonition produced the desired result. His father, who apparently understood the psychology of the child better, came to the conclusion that there was little point in forcing an unwilling pupil to learn.¹

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was, however, interested in sports and games current during his time and he devoted a good deal of attention to physical exercise and wrestling. He was also fond of swimming and excelled in the art. Numerous stories have come down to us of his weight-lifting feats and general physical powers and courage during his childhood and adolescence.

While still young his father died and he was faced with the problem of earning a living for himself and supporting his family. Lucknow was near at hand and had become, after the decline of the central power at Delhi, an important political and business centre. The Sayyid with seven of his relations went to Lucknow in search of employment but they did not succeed in their mission.² After a three months stay at Lucknow he decided to give up the pursuit and proceeded instead to Delhi to get himself enrolled among the pupil-disciples of Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz, the greatest *'alim* of his age and the son of a still greater man, Hazrat Shah Waliullah. The Sayyid's family had already been associated with Shah Waliullah and his sons. The Sayyid's own uncle,

¹ *Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyah*, Vol. 1, p. 32 and *Makhzan-i-Ahmadi*, folio 16. which is the most reliable authority on the early life of the Sayyid, the author, Sayyid Muhammad Ali, being the Sayyid's own nephew.

Makhzan-i-Ahmadi, folios 17-20. The author was one of the party that travelled to Lucknow.

Sayyid Muhammad Nu'man and maternal grandfather, Shah Abu Sa'id, had been the disciples of Shah Waliullah and the Sayyid's elder brother, Shah Muhammad Ishaq was a pupil of Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz and his younger brother, Shah 'Abdul Qadir. In the circumstances it was by no means extraordinary for Sayyid Ahmad Shahid to turn to Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz.

On reaching Delhi he presented himself to Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz, who was happy to learn that the Sayyid was so closely related to Sayyid Nu'man and Sayyid Abu Sa'id. Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz was impressed by his simple Islamic way of greeting—*Assalamu-'alaikum*—because this mode of greeting had all but disappeared from among the Muslims and the more elaborate and sophisticated formulæ—*adab*, *taslimat*, etc.—were in vogue at the time. Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz entrusted the young Sayyid to the care of his brother Shah 'Abdul Qadir. While in Delhi he resided in the *Akbari Mosque*, which was situated where now the Edward Park is. He studied under Shah 'Abdul Qadir and Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz. The latter was also his spiritual guide who initiated him into the *Chishtiyah*, *Qadriyah* and *Naqshbandiyah* orders of *sufism*.

In the course of his lessons the Sayyid experienced a peculiar experience. Although he showed enthusiasm in the study of the *Qur'an* and the *Hadis*, he was not at all attracted towards other subjects. Indeed at one stage his eye would not see the written word ! Some thought it was a physical ailment. Perhaps it was the final indication by Nature itself that he was not meant for reading and writing.

After nearly two years of study when he was about twenty-two years old he left Delhi for his home. During his stay at Delhi (1807-09) he had acquired the essential knowledge of the *Qur'an* and the *Hadis*, picked up Persian and was initiated into the mysteries of *sufism* by Shah Abdul 'Aziz. These two years of training are of great importance. Indeed they provided a

turning point in his life. He came out of the academy of Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz a passionate believer in his mission which was to propagate the teachings of the *Holy Qur'an* and *Hadis*.

On his return to Rai-Bareli he was hailed by the people as a divine, because of his exemplary character and his simple and pious life. His spiritual association with Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz further enhanced his reputation. Many were keen on becoming his disciples. But he had made up his mind to dedicate himself to a soldier's life. Many people could not understand why such a pious man, who possessed all the qualifications of an ideal spiritual leader, should think in terms of a military career.

After spending about two years at home during which period he was married, he proceeded to Malwa, the scene of Amir Khan Pindari's activities. His elder brother Sayyid Ibrahim was already in the employment of Amir Khan and this might have been one of the reasons why Sayyid Ahmad Shahid chose this service. In any case he joined Amir Khan's cavalry as a *sawar*. Now followed several years of hazardous life. These years were also years of training and preparation for the ultimate fight for the Faith which he was destined to lead. The Sayyid gave a good account of himself in the battles fought by Amir Khan. Consequently he was promoted to the command of Amir Khan's own body-guard. As a Sayyid among Pathans—Amir Khan's forces consisted almost wholly of Pathans—he occupied a position of prominence. Because of his exemplary life, his character and his spiritual gifts he became a centre of attraction for Amir Khan's men. After the death of Sayyid Ibrahim he used to lead the prayers. The Sayyid's biographers also refer to the great influence which he exercised over Amir Khan and state that such was the hold of the Sayyid over the Khan that the latter seldom took any vital decision on political and military matters without

reference to the former. These assertions though not corroborated by direct contemporary accounts nor by Amir Khan's own *Memoirs*¹ may have an element of truth, indirectly supported as they are by no less a person than the son and successor of Amir Khan, Nawab Wazir-ud-Daulah.²

Opposite views have been expressed about the influence exercised by the Sayyid on Amir Khan in the last stage of his adventurous career when he made peace with the British in 1817 as the *Nawab* of Tonk, a principality specially carved out for him. Earlier secondary works such as Maulvi Muhammad Ja'far Thanasari's *Tawarikh-i-'Ajibah* and Mirza Hairat's *Hayat-i-Tayyibah* refer to the Sayyid's role as one of moderation and understanding while the more recent works of Sayyid Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadvi and Ghulam Rasul Mihr speak of him as an opponent of rapprochement. The authority of the two last-named is the *Waqai'-Ahmadi* which is a collection of papers in manuscript written by a team of writers, quite sometime after the death of the Sayyid for Nawab Wazir-ud-Daulah of Tonk. It may well be that the Sayyid had not yet reached that status, politically speaking, when in a matter like this he could influence in a decisive manner a man like Amir Khan. Earlier writers have obviously painted the Sayyid as pro-British because they wrote at a time when the British were still persecuting the Wahhabis, and, consequently, their well-wishers tried as best they could to remove British misgivings regarding the founder of the movement. Later works were published in a totally different atmosphere and it was unnecessary for their writers to paint the Sayyid as pro-British. Whatever view the Sayyid might have held about the British, it is unlikely that these vitally affected the negotiations between Amir Khan and the British. In support of this the best evidence is provided by the significant silence on the subject of all direct

¹ *Memoirs of Muhammad Amir Khan* compiled in Persian by Busawan Lal and translated into English by H.T. Princep, Calcutta, 1832.

² *Nawab Wazir-ud-Daulah, Wasaya-al-Waziri*, Tonk, 1284 A.H.

contemporary writings, English and Persian, on the life of Amir Khan. The Sayyid does not picture in these works at all.

After seven turbulent years the Sayyid returned to Delhi towards the end of 1817. The years of preparation were over. Now he was a mature person with varied experience and possessing certain definite spiritual gifts. On the advice of Shah 'Abdul Aziz, two of his close relations—his nephew Shah Isma'il Shahid and his son-in-law, Maulvi Abdul Hai—accepted the Sayyid as their spiritual guide. It was no ordinary matter for both these luminaries of the house of Shah Waliullah to own allegiance to a comparatively less known and less learned person. This alone was sufficient to make him the centre of attraction for a large number of people. Numerous invitations came to him to visit various places. He actually undertook journeys to Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Deoband, Rampur, Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, etc. Everywhere he was hailed as a man of God. His proclaimed objective was to restore Islam to its pristine purity and to cleanse it of all superstitious accretions of Indian and Iranian origin. He was not interested in hair-splitting and doctrinal controversies. His message was simple: he exhorted his hearers to believe in the unity of God and to lead good lives. A large number of people were converted to his views. It was during this journey that at Rampur he heard from certain Afghans of the plight of Muslims under the Sikhs which made a great impression on his sensitive mind and produced results of far-reaching importance.

At the conclusion of his travels he arrived at his home town, Rai-Bareilly, with a party of about seventy or eighty people including his two principal lieutenants, Shah Isma'il and Maulvi 'Abdul Hai. The reform movement was now in full swing and the Sayyid headed a country-wide organization. More journeys were undertaken, among which one was to Lucknow, where he

achieved a profound success. Everywhere large numbers of men performed *bai'at* and came under the influence of the Sayyid's magnetic personality. They were also impressed by the eloquence and scholarship of his lieutenants Shah Isma'il Shahid and Maulvi 'Abdul Hai. Already they were talking more and more of *jihad* and these exhortations were proving extremely effective.

In July 1821 the Sayyid proceeded to Mecca to perform *hajj*. The pilgrimage to Mecca was one of the pillars of Islam but on the pretext that the journey had become dangerous the Muslims of the sub continent had very nearly abandoned this during the eighteenth century. The Sayyid undertook a pilgrimage with a large party of four hundred persons including women and children. He did not take the shortest route. He decided to proceed by way of Calcutta. The journey to Calcutta was made in boats and he got down at numerous places including Allahabad, Benares, Ghazipur, 'Azimabad (Patna), Monghyr, Bhagalpur and Murshidabad. At Calcutta he was given an unprecedented reception. So great was the rush for *bai'at* at Calcutta that instead of extending his hand which is the normal practice he adopted the device of spreading his turban by touching which one could enter the circle of his disciples. The long journey to Calcutta and the three months' stay in that city gave the Sayyid an opportunity of establishing a well-knit organization in support of his movement for reformation and *jihad*.

In May—1822 the journey took full ten months from his home—he reached the land of his dreams. After spending nearly a year and a half in Arabia, mostly in Mecca, he returned to the sub continent, reaching his home in May 1824. The return journey was also made *via* Calcutta. The story of his visit to Constantinople lacks evidence and seems to be unfounded.

During his stay in Arabia the Sayyid came into contact with numerous scholars and acquired a knowledge

of the various movements of the world of Islam. He must also have come across the Wahhabis and Wahhabism; but it is wrong to consider his movement as an offshoot of Wahhabism as so many European writers have done. While the Sayyid was in Arabia, Wahhabism, as a political force, was at a very low ebb. The main ideas of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid had already been formulated before his departure for Arabia. The two most authoritative works of the movement, *Sirat-ul-Mustaqim* and *Taqwiyat-ul-Iman* were compiled before the pilgrimage. The only influence which one can trace in these writings is that of Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani and more particularly of Shah Waliullah and Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz. But of course there was a good deal that was similar in the teachings of the Sayyid and Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahhab. This was to be expected, for, as has been pointed out by a modern writer, whoever would try to make the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* the basis of his theories would naturally come to many identical conclusions.¹ What is important, is that if there were similarities in the two sets of teachings, there were also differences which will become apparent when we discuss his teachings. Yet Sir William Hunter, writing in 1870, speaks of the Wahhabi influence on the Sayyid as a result of his visit to Arabia, in these words, "Whatever was dreaming in his nature now gave place to a fiery ecstasy, in which he beheld himself planting the Crescent throughout every district in India.....Whatever had been indistinct in his teaching, henceforth assumed the precision of that fierce, formulated theology, by which 'Abdul Wahhab had founded a great kingdom in Arabia, and which Sayyid Ahmad hoped would enable him to rear a 'still greater and more lasting Empire in India."²

On his return from the pilgrimage, the Sayyid started his preparations with renewed vigour and shortly afterwards entered upon the most important phase of his life—*jihad*—for his liberating efforts lasted for several years

¹ Masud 'Alam Nadwi *Hinglusan Ki Pahli Islami Tahrik*, second edition, p. 28.

² W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Mussalmans*, (1945 edition), p. 53.

and ended on Friday the 6th May, 1831, when he, along with a large number of his followers including Maulvi Isma'il Shahid, was killed at Balakot in the district of Hazara.

Thus came to an end a life full of activity and movement. There was, however, a certain amount of mystery surrounding his death. Only recently it was established that his body was burnt by the Sikhs.¹ Nothing was left of his remains. This was the utmost that could be done to a great Muslim leader. This act of vengeance attains added significance when it is remembered that among the illiterate Pathans the superstition is common even to this day that the soul of a person can never rest in peace or enter paradise if his body is burnt. It is possible that by burning the body of the Sayyid, it was intended to impress upon the people of the area how mistaken they had been in regarding the Sayyid as a saint and religious leader.

The burning of the body was one of the important factors which contributed towards the theory of *ghaibubat* or disappearance. For many years after the Battle of Balakot people continued to believe that the Sayyid was not dead and that he would reappear at an appropriate moment. Among men who believed in this theory were not only common folk but also eminent leaders of the movement such as Maulana Wilayat 'Ali of Patna who actually wrote a pamphlet on the subject.

The news of the Sayyid's death caused great joy and satisfaction at Ranjit Singh's court. Ranjit Singh "ordered a Royal salute to be fired and the city of Amritsar to be illuminated in honour of the event."² This was understandable. For seven years the Sayyid had

¹ On the question of the death of the Sayyid see Wade's despatch to H. T. Princep, secretary to the governor-general dated 17 May, 1831, in the Records Office of the Panjab Government, Lahore.

See also the author's article entitled 'The Mystery of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's Death' in the *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, July, 1955.

² Wade's despatch referred to above.

been a thorn in the side of Ranjit Singh, and his death brought relief to him. But what is astounding is that a section of the Muslim population of Delhi through sectarian considerations should have celebrated the death of Shah Isma'il and distributed sweets on the occasion.

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was not a scholar in the formal sense of the term. But God had given him the gift of a magnetic personality and a persuasive tongue. His manner was straightforward and his life simple. On fundamentals he would stand firm like a rock but in matters of detail he would exercise the greatest moderation and would accept any compromise.

Those who came into contact with him became his devoted followers. The number of his disciples was enormous. According to one estimate as many as four million people chose him as their spiritual guide, among whom were some of the most prominent scholars, religious leaders and *sufis* of the time.

In order to understand the teachings of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid it is necessary to visualize them in the environment in which they were born. The proper approach to his teachings would be to place them in their historical setting.

The early nineteenth century was, for the Muslims of the sub continent, a period of decay and degeneration. Their political ascendancy had come to an end. Into their social life had crept all kinds of evils. The Islam which they practised was something very different from the simple monotheistic creed which was contained in the *Qur'an* and had been practised by the Prophet of Islam. Any number of innovations had been introduced into it and the ignorant thought them to be the very essence of religion. These innovations had come through many sources—but Hindu influence was undoubtedly the most prominent.

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid aimed at the renaissance of Islam in the Indo-Pakistan sub continent; in the religious as well as the political spheres.

It has been customary to regard Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and his followers as "Wahhabis". Among the Muslims one of the first to use this term was Maulvi Fazl-i-Rasul of Badaun. When the followers of the Sayyid came into conflict with the British government in India, the British also popularized this term obviously to create distrust among the Muslim populace. But this epithet has little justification. There was not much that was common to Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahhab and Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and the theory that the latter derived his doctrines from the former is not tenable. Historically Sayyid Ahmad Shahid had already formulated his ideas of reform before he performed the *hajj* during which he is supposed to have come under the influence of the Wahhabis. It is also significant that the Wahhabis had been dislodged from the Hijaz before the Sayyid's arrival in Mecca. Moreover there were many important differences between the two schools of thought. The Sayyid's moderate views on *taqlid* and his attitude towards *sufism* may be cited as two of the principal differences; Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahhab rejected both absolutely, whereas the Sayyid did not.

If the origin of the Sayyid's doctrines cannot be traced to Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahhab, then where is the origin to be found? The answer seems to be that Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's teachings had an indigenous origin. He was influenced in his ideas by the *Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani* and more particularly by Shah Waliullah and Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz. In fact he was, as we have seen, a regular member of Shah Waliullah's school. He himself was a pupil of Shah 'Abdul Qadir and a disciple of Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz, both sons of Shah Waliullah, and his two principal lieutenants were Shah Isma'il Shahid and Maulvi 'Abdul Hai, nephew and son-in-law respectively of Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz. What is even more important is that there was hardly anything in his religious or political doctrines which could not be

traced to Shah Waliullah and Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz. The only difference was that whereas Shah Waliullah and Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz were great men of learning and piety who chose to serve Indian Islam by pen and word of mouth, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was primarily a man of action.

The teachings of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid or the fundamentals of the movement he led may be classified under four heads:

1. Fight against corrupt practices and innovations in general;
2. Attitude towards *taqlid* and *ijtihad*;
3. Reform of *sufism*;
4. Political aims and objectives.

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid showed great zeal in denouncing all innovations in Islam. This no doubt was common ground between him and Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahhab. Among the innovations considered by the Sayyid as particularly obnoxious were those which directly or indirectly associated anyone with God in His Divinity. The *Sirat-ul-Mustaqim* classifies the innovations into three categories, those which have sprung from association with the corrupt *sufis*, those of heretical origin; and those which have come through the imitation of bad and corrupt practices generally in vogue in the sub continent.

Among the abuses which have been strongly criticised in various treatises is the excess of reverence shown to religious guides. The practice of having religious guides had become all too common in India. The masses showed exaggerated deference to them. The rule laid down in the *Sirat-ul-Mustaqim* is that it is quite proper to adopt a religious guide or instructor, and indeed essential for those who desire to tread the right path and obtain the rewards of contemplative devotion, but there are limits to the respect to be shown to such a person. He should not be obeyed in preference to the injunctions laid down in the *Qur'an* and in the traditions of the

Prophet. Only in less important matters, should his authority be held paramount. "Follow no one", says the *Taqwiyat-ul-Iman*, "be he *mujtahid*, *imam*, *ghaus*, *qutb*, *maulvi*, *mashaikh*, king, minister, *padri*, or pundit against the authority of the *Qur'an* and the *Hadis*."

These treatises denounce the practice of making pilgrimages to the tombs of saints for making offerings and soliciting favours. The reverence shown to these shrines amounted almost to worship. The *ta'ziyahs* and *'alams* on the occasion of *Muharram* and other practices associated with the institution were another object of attack. Many practices such as the customary *qiyam* had been taken for granted in connection with the *Milad-un-Nabi*, the birthday celebrations of the Prophet. Similarly fire-works and the preparation of *halwa* were regarded as indispensable on *Shab-i-Bar'at*. The Sayyid strongly condemned these innovations.

The remarriage of widows among the Muslims had become almost as uncommon as among the Hindus. The Sayyid fought against this evil. Maulvi Isma'il Shahid actually persuaded his own widowed sister to remarry. This was considered to be a most unusual and revolutionary step. Lavish expenditure on the occasion of marriage, birth and death was also condemned. All kinds of superstitions were common and marriage, birth and death had become occasions for elaborate ritual. The Sayyid's approach to these institutions was puritanic. What he aimed at was a severe simplicity and avoidance of the smallest departure from Islamic practice. Ceremonial observances such as *Giarhwin* and *Bibi-ki-Sehnak* were declared as innovations and as such aberrations. On the question of *taqlid*¹ Sayyid Ahmad Shahid adopted a middle course. He studiously avoided minor controversies about religion. He was a believer in compromise. But among his followers

¹ *Taqlid* implies the acceptance of one of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence established by Imam Malik, Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Shafi'i, and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal.

there were, from the very beginning, two groups and he had to struggle hard to keep them together. His position as *imam* and his extraordinary powers of persuasion prevented disintegration among his followers as long as he lived. Of the two groups one was headed by Maulvi 'Abdul Hai, the son-in-law of Maulana Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz, and Maulvi Karamat 'Ali of Jaunpur, who spent the later part of his life in Bengal and exerted such a benificent influence on millions of men. This section conformed to Hanafi practice. The other group was led by Shah Muhammad Isma'il and stood much nearer to the Wahhabis of Arabia. It repudiated the propriety of following any of the four *Imams*. It believed in the right of independent interpretation. The Sayyid stood in the middle. In actual practice he observed the rules of the Hanafi school, but did not consider them unalterable. Shah Waliullah in his '*Iqd-ul-Jid* had already dwelt on the limitations of *taqlid* and the potentialities of *ijtihad*. Sayyid Ahmad Shahid seems to have held the same views on this question as Shah Waliullah. For reasons of policy he even advised Shah Isma'il not to insist on minor deviations from the normal method of prayer such as *amin-bil-jih*r or *raf-'i-yadain* while living among the Pathans because it created suspicions in the minds of the people and adversely affected the chances of the success of the *mujahidin*.

The basic ideas in *sufism* are the entire subordination of personal and worldly interests to the will of God and a burning love for Him. In this sense *sufism* is Islam. In the time of the Prophet and the pious caliphs, *sufism* was not a separate school of thought or mode of life. Even the word was unknown. But gradually *sufism* was evolved as a system. *Tariqat*, the road to *sufistic* perfection, and *Shari'at*, the Islamic Law, became distinct from one another even though one did not by any means exclude the other.

The *sufi* saints had played a prominent role in the growth and expansion of Islam in the sub continent. But with the decline of political power *sufism* also had degenerated. At its best, during this period, *sufism* had become an escapist philosophy of life and at its worst a not too exalted profession. To many an unscrupulous person it was just a means of livelihood. Many of the *sufis* did not at all bother about the *Shari'at*. They had their own ideas about right and wrong, about *haram* and *halal*, about rights and obligations. At this level *sufism* consisted in donning loose robes and wearing long hair. Its adherents listened to music to produce religious ecstasy. Their activities at the tombs of saints directly or indirectly encouraged tomb-worship. They freely indulged in practices which were the very negation of the Islamic doctrine of monotheism. The *sufis* who did not belong to this category and whose lives were devoted to meditation were lost to society. Instead of making this world worth living, they had, perhaps in sheer disgust, chosen to withdraw themselves from it. They were busy in prayers and fasts. They refused to take any notice of what was happening outside their cells. Persian and Urdu poets had helped in spreading *sufistic* ideals. Not only did they popularise the idea of *wahdat-ul-wujud*, they also criticised and even ridiculed orthodox Islam. In the eyes of many a poet there was little to choose between *dair* and *haram* and *mandir* and *masjid*. Quite often they attacked the fundamentals of Islam.¹

¹ Iqbal has given a beautiful example of this tendency among Persian poets. An institution like *jihad* which is so essential for the very existence of Islam has been attacked in the following lines in such a subtle manner that the reader would hardly think that there was anything wrong with it:

غازی زہی شہادت اندر تگ و ہو است
 غافل کہ شہید عشق فاضل ترازاوست
 در روز قیامت این بہ او کے ما ند
 این کشتہ دشمن اشت و ان کشتہ دوست

Two alternatives were open to Sayyid Ahmad Shahid : to reject *sufism* totally as Muhammad bin 'Abdul Wahhab had done or to reform it and make it conform to the tenets of Islam as had been attempted by the *Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani* and Shah Waliullah. Sayyid Ahmad Shahid chose the latter course. Indeed, he claimed to be a *sufi* himself. He had, it is true, little respect for the subtle metaphysical speculations of the *sufis* and he denounced in no uncertain terms those professors of *sufism* as did not strictly observe the tenets of Islam. In one place in the *Sirat-ul-Mustaqim*, a work which is indispensable for an understanding of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's ideas on *sufism*, occurs the following characteristic denunciation of the *sufis* of this type: " Among the greatest obstructions in the path of God are atheistic and heretic pretenders to *sufism* who not only are not afraid of violating the commands of Islamic Law but make such violation their habit and characteristic, who teach and learn detestable, innovating, impious exercises or practices and who propagate atheism in the world. Let such persons be dealt with according to their deeds. If it be not in your power to enforce the commands of law, look on such persons with loathing and regard the very sight of them as an abomination."

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was a *sufi*. But unlike most *sufis* of the subcontinent he did not exclusively belong to one or the other of the well-known schools—*Qadriyah* which traces its origin to Shaikh 'Abdul Qadir Gilani ; *Chishtiyah* which derives its name from Abu Ishaq ; *Naqshbandiyah*, so called from its founder Khwajah Baha-ud-din Naqshband and a branch of the *Naqshbandiyah*, *Mujaddidiyah*, named after *Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani*. It was the peculiarity of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid that he had been initiated into all these schools and as such was privileged to admit followers into any one or all of them. In addition he was the founder of a new school which he called the "*Muhammadiyah*." The *Sirat-ul-Mustaqim* contains formulae and practices of

the four schools of *sufism* which were modified by the Sayyid so as to make them easier and more effective.

His own system, *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah*, finds a detailed exposition in the book. One question has been regarded as fundamental and discussed throughout in *sufi* literature: it is that of *wahdāt-ul-wujud* or the identity of the Creator and the created. The doctrine was questioned by *Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani* who preached the parallel doctrine of *wahdat-ush-shuhud*.¹ Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, however, was not much concerned with the theoretical niceties—his object was to rouse the Muslims of the sub continent, to unite them, to purify their beliefs and to prepare them for *jihad*. He, therefore, dismisses the question in a few words. It is declared in the *Sirat-ul-Mustaqim* that the point is one which it is worse than useless to be constantly discussing, all that is to be remembered is what has already been said about it by the illustrious authorities of *sufism*: that created things are not to be considered as actually the same as God, though they have their stability and permanence in Him, and are the media in which he has chosen to manifest. His attributes. Thus on this fundamental issue Sayyid Ahmad Shahid practically accepted the teachings of *Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani* in preference to those of Muhiy-ud-din Ibn-i-Arabi.

Leaving aside the above philosophical aspect of *sufism*, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid reformed *sufism* in three respects.

Firstly he emphasized the necessity of doing away with all innovations and accretions which had entered into the life of Muslims through the agency of a corrupt form of *sufism*. It has already been mentioned that he was opposed to all semblance of saint-worship.

Some people remarked that though he was so vehement in stopping people from tomb-worship, his own followers and disciples would start worshipping his tomb

¹ For the Mujaddid's ideas see *Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani* in Persian, edited by Nur Ahmad, Amritsar 1334 A.H. The letters are available in Urdu as well. Among secondary works Burhan-ud-din Ahmad Farooqi's *The Mujaddid's conception of Tauhid*, Lahore, 1940, may be mentioned.

after his death. He said in reply, that he would pray for the disappearance of his grave so that no one might know where he was buried.¹ This proved to be prophetic.²

Secondly Sayyid Ahmad Shahid made it clear that *Tariqat* and *Shari'at* were not self exclusive. In any case, no one, however exalted his spiritual status, could consider himself above the *Shari'at*. Indeed he could not reach that high status without strictly following the *Shari'at*.

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid laid particular emphasis on the importance of strictly following the *sunnah* of the Prophet. There is an interesting discourse in the *Sirat-ul-Mustaqim* on the *hubbi-i-'ishqi* and *hubb-i-imani*, the two forms of the love of God as well as *tariq-i-wilayat* and *tariq-i-nabuwwat*, the two paths which lead to the same goal.

Finally, what distinguished Sayyid Ahmad Shahid from other *sufis* of his times was his insistence on *jihad* which was the very opposite of the life of inactivity led by the average *sufi*. Under his inspiring guidance a country-wide movement for *jihad* came into being. Indeed the whole of his *sufistic* teachings seemed to have the sole purpose of preparing his disciples for the supreme effort of waging a holy war not for the sake of personal gain or political advantage but to establish an Islamic State. It was rather extraordinary that a *sufi* should play such a revolutionary role in the political history of Islam.

There has been much controversy regarding the political aims of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. Ever since Hunter's book, "*The Indian Mussalmans*", published in 1871, most European writers have held the view that the "Wahhabi" movement in India was from its very beginning directed against British power, a fact to which the English rulers were, however, blind, and that it was only after many lives had been lost and expensive expeditions undertaken that the movement could be

¹ *Wasaya-i-Waziri* by Nawab Waziri-ud-Daulah of Tonk.

² *The Mystery of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's Death* in the *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, July, 1955.

brought under control. Another set of writers, mostly followers or admirers of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid took great pains to prove that the Sayyid had no quarrel with the British and that his energies were exclusively directed against the Sikhs. They went even further and suggested that not only was he not hostile to the British but that he actually declared that the Muslims had no grievance whatsoever against them. Among this category of writers are Maulvi Muhammad Ja'far of Thanesar who has given us the first systematic biography of the Sayyid and the great Muslim leader Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan.¹ These writers point out in support of their theory that the authorities of the East India Company did not in any way try to put a stop to his movement and they even encouraged it apparently because Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was not hostile to them and because he was indirectly helping their cause by fighting against the growing Sikh menace. It seems that each of these theories contains but a part of the truth and each is therefore misleading.

Let us first take the ultimate aim. The decay of the Mughul Empire dated from the death of 'Alamgir in 1707. The process of disintegration continued throughout the eighteenth century until the direct descendant of the Great Mughuls came under the protection of several indigenous and foreign rulers.

Having changed his protectors more than once during the century, the Emperor finally accepted British overlordship in 1803 when Lake marched into Delhi. The country was still supposed to be the Emperor's, only he could not rule over it! Within less than two decades of this event what was left of Maratha power was also destroyed and the Company's rule, direct and indirect, was now established over the whole of the sub continent with the exception of the Panjab and Sind. No wonder Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz, the leader and religious guide of the

¹ Muhammad Ja'far Thanessari, *Tawarikh-i-'Ajibah* and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, "Review of Dr. Hunter's *Indian Mussalmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel against the Queen?*", 1872.

Sayyid, realized that India was no more a land of Islam. One of his *fatwas* reads as follows:—

“In this city (Delhi) the *imam* of the Muslims does not exercise any authority whatsoever. The Christians rule without hindrance. The establishment of their rule means that the infidels have the determining voice in matters relating to the administration of the country, the collection of land revenues, the imposition of the tithes on trade, the punishment of robbers and thieves and the infliction of penalties for various crimes. And if they do not object to certain Muslim religious observances such as the saying of prayers on Fridays and on the occasion of the two ‘*Ids*’ and the calling of the *azan* and the slaughtering of cows, it matters little. They do not attach any importance to the underlying principles of these institutions for they demolish mosques when it pleases them and no Muslim or *zimmi* dare enter the city or its neighbourhood without their permission. In their own interest they do not object to the entry of messengers, travellers and merchants. Other personages, however, like Shuja‘-ul-Mulk and Wilayati Begum cannot enter this territory without their permission. This rule of the Christians extends from this city right up to Calcutta.”¹

The same ideas find expression in a letter written in Arabic verse by Shah ‘Abdul ‘Aziz to his uncle Shah Ahlullah although his nattack is directed against the Sikhs and the Marathas.²

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid writing in the same strain says in one of his letters to Nawab Sulaiman Jah:

“During the last few years fate has been so unkind to the Government and Empire in India that the accursed Christians and the mischievous polytheists have started oppressing people. Atheistic and polytheistic practices are openly indulged in and Islamic observances have disappeared. This unhappy state of affairs fills my heart with

¹ *Fatwa-i-‘Aziz*, Vol. I (Mujtabai Press, Delhi, 1322 A.H.) pp. 16-17.

² Quoted by Maulvi ‘Ubaidullah Sindhi, *Hizb-i-Imam Waliullah Dihlvi ki Ijmalī Tarikh ka Muqaddamah*, Lahore, 1942, p. 91.

sorrow and I became anxious to perform *hijrat*. My heart is filled with shame at this religious degradation and my head contains but one thought—how to organise *jihad*.”¹

Thus, since India had become a land of the enemy the obvious religious duty of the Muslims was *jihad* or *hijrat*. In other words it was incumbent on Muslims to raise the standard of revolt, and should that be impossible to leave this land of the enemy for the land of Islam.

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid thought that *jihad* was possible. He brushed aside all those arguments which favoured inactivity. Persons, who suggested that without requisite preparation and leadership, *jihad* was not obligatory, were vehemently repudiated.

Jihad there must be. But what for? To re-establish the power and prestige of the Mughul Emperor? To champion the cause of some other Muslim prince? To establish a State with Sayyid Ahmad as its sovereign? From what Sayyid Ahmad Shahid said and from the kind of life he led it is clear that his larger objective was the establishment of the kingdom of Islam.

Jihad was only a means to this end. He would not shed Muslim blood in order that corrupt Muslim rulers should obtain another lease of life. Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was an idealist, a dreamer of dreams.

Again and again we come across sentiments such as these in his numerous letters and proclamations. He is not after worldly goods; his aim is not to deprive princes of their principalities : he has no personal ambitions ; his only desire is that Islam should prevail.²

An Islamic state rather than a mere state of the Muslims was the ideal for which Sayyid Ahmad Shahid lived and died. Shah Isma'il Shahid has examined in his treatise, *Mansab-i-Imamat*, the theory of political leadership in

1 Quoted by Sayyid Abul Hasan Nadwi, p. 110.

2 For some of his typical utterances see his letters (quoted by Sayyid Abul Hasan Nadwi to Sardar Budh Singh, Sardar Sultan Muhammad Khan and Sardar Sa'id Muhammad Khan. He tells them that he has accepted the leadership of the Muslims for the sole reason of organising *jihad* as prescribed by Islam.

Islam. There is no place, according to him for kingship in Islam. "The politics of Islam and the politics of kings are as different as sweet and brackish waters, should the two be mixed it would obviously be the sweet water which would lose its taste."

These were no mere words. For a short time and within a small area the Sayyid did experiment with the political system envisaged in Islam. For the first time, after so many centuries of Muslim rule over India, an Islamic State functioned in the north-west of India. Its small dimensions and brief duration are responsible for its neglect by historians. But there is no doubt that it was a new kind of experiment.

Now, if the establishment of an Islamic state was the ideal, as undoubtedly it was, then the question suggests itself : why did not the Sayyid direct his efforts towards the elimination of British influence from India ? Why instead of challenging British supremacy did he chose to fight against the Sikhs.

It seems that purely practical considerations determined the attitude of the Sayyid. To deal with one enemy at a time is common sense. Of the two, namely the East India Company and the Sikhs, the Sikhs were obviously the lesser power and the chances of success against them were consequently greater. The Frontier and the Panjab were predominantly Muslim areas. Yet the condition of the Muslims in these areas was particularly deplorable. The fighting qualities of the Pathans, if properly employed, were likely to be of great value to the movement. The nearness of Muslim principalities was no mean advantage.

Thus, at least for the time being there was no conflict between the Sayyid and the British. It suited the British authorities that Ranjit Singh should be kept busy in the west to neutralise him in the east. Consequently, although the East India Company did not give any direct help to the Sayyid it did not mind help

being given to him by people under its jurisdiction. Sometime in 1827, Metcalfe, the British resident at Delhi, wrote to the Secretary "During the period of their recent attack on Ranjit's territories, the most fervent anxiety for their success pervaded the mind of the population of Delhi. Numbers quitted their homes and marched to join them including some who resigned their employment in the Company's service. It is said that the King of Delhi encouraged this spirit. If he did, the fact was not forced on my attention."

The Company did not object to the collection of funds and recruitment of men for *jihad*. As a matter of fact Shah Muhammad Ishaq, the chief representative of the movement at Delhi, obtained a decree against a merchant who had embezzled funds meant for the movement. All this happened apparently because the movement at this stage was directed only against the Sikhs. When Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was killed in 1831, Wade wrote to the Secretary : "The Sikhs having finally achieved the extinction of the Sayyid who has afforded employment to their arms for the past five years, nearly all are now speculating on the future of their exploits. Their career has been one of continual warfare with a large disposable army impatient of repose. His Highness will not be long before he directs his attention to another quarter."

It was only after the Panjab was conquered by the British that the followers of the Sayyid and the British came into conflict. At this stage they became the chief anti-British force in Indian politics.

There had been reformers, rulers and statesmen before Sayyid Ahmad Shahid who were fired with the same enthusiasm for the resurgence of Islam ; but these reformers had attempted to appeal to the intelligentsia and sought the cooperation of rulers and powerful political dignitaries less; political personages had tried to achieve this goal with the help of armies; neither had built up the backing of a proper political organization.

It was Sayyid Ahmad Shahid who first used the technique of winning the support of the masses for his programme and created a political organization for its furtherance and execution. He was the first popular, political leader in this sub continent.

CHAPTER XX

SAYYID AHMAD SHAHID (II)

Jihad

After his return from the pilgrimage to Mecca, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid spent nearly two years in making the necessary preparations for *jihad*. Finally on Monday, the 16th January, 1826, he left his home on a long and arduous journey, never to return. He was then forty years of age. The number of his companions is estimated at between five and six hundred. The party left for the north-western region by a circuitous route covering a couple of thousand miles. Going through the Panjab was out of question, since there the Sikhs were supreme and the Sayyid's mission was to fight against them. Moreover, the round about route adopted enabled the Sayyid to popularize the movement and to come into contact with several Muslim rulers and chieftains whose support he tried to enlist.

The first important place visited by the party was Gwalior, where it was well received. Here, there were a number of influential Muslims at the court who had been admirers of the Sayyid and they did everything to make his stay at Gwalior comfortable. Some members of the ruling family, notably Hindu Rao, the brother-in-law of the Maharaja and a very influential figure, showed great regard and consideration for the Sayyid.

From Gwalior, the party went to Tonk, *via* Khushalgarh, Dantoli and Nandari. Amir Khan, the founder and ruler of Tonk, was still alive. The Sayyid had been well-known to him, having spent several years of his life in his service. Now in turn he formally entered the circle of the Sayyid's disciples.¹ Amir Khan

¹ *Wasaya*, II, p. 110.

presented a garden to the Sayyid, which he then made over to the heir-apparent. The garden, since it had been Amir Khan's present, came to be known as *Nazr Bagh*¹. Amir Khan also persuaded the Sayyid to ask his dependants to migrate to Tonk. Amir Khan promised to look after them. Apparently the Sayyid's visit to Tonk was a great success. Many persons accepted him as their spiritual guide. He also seems to have collected considerable funds and some equipment for the coming struggle.

The next important place to be visited was Ajmer. From here Maulvi 'Abdul Hai, one of the principal lieutenants of the Sayyid was sent to Delhi on a special mission probably relating to the supply of funds, from where he proceeded to the scene of the *jihad* via Panipat, Karnal, Thanesar, Mamdot, Bahawalpur, Marwar, Sind, Baluchistan and Afghanistan.²

From Ajmer the Sayyid proceeded to Pali, an important commercial centre of Rajputana. The journey had so far taken about three months. The summer was approaching and long distances had still to be covered.

Crossing the State of Jodhpur the party reached Kāthiār, on the outskirts of Sind, after a very tedious and uncomfortable journey. Shortage of water in the course of the march, caused great hardship to the men as well as the beasts of burden.

Sind had not yet fallen to the British and it was ruled by the Mirs who had their quarrels with Jodhpur and were suspicious of British intentions. The local officials at Amarkot and Mirpur could not quite understand the significance of the Sayyid's mission and suspected him of working on behalf of either Jodhpur or the British.

¹ Sayyid Muhammad Ya'qub, "*Mulakhkhas-i-Halat-i-Qafila Salar-wa Akabr-i-Qafila*", which was copied for me from a manuscript by my revered teacher the late Maulana Sayyid Sharfuddin of Tonk. p. 1.

² From the details of the Sayyid's journey from Rai-Bareli to the Frontier see Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi's "*Sirat-i-Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*" and Ghulam Rasul Mehr's "*Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*". Maulvi Jafar Thanessari's account in *Tawarikh-i-Ajibah* is not reliable. He seems to have mixed up Maulana Abdul Hai's route with Sayyid Ahmad Shahid's.

However, at Hyderabad the Sayyid was well received. The Mirs showed all respect to him and entertained the whole party during its stay at Hyderabad. They also invited the Sayyid's family to stay at Hyderabad. Numerous people including some important personages of the town became his disciples. He also collected some money for the *jihād*. But if he had expected to obtain the active participation of the Mirs in the *jihād*, he must have been greatly disappointed.

It was from Hyderabad that the Sayyid tried to get in touch with Bahawal Khan, the ruler of Bahawalpur. He invited him to participate in the *jihād*. Like the Mirs of Hyderabad, the ruler of Bahawalpur did not commit himself. But the invitation was not without its effect upon the populace. Masson, a contemporary authority, who first learnt about the Sayyid while at Bahawalpur, has portrayed the enthusiasm which the Sayyid's march through Sind aroused among the people.

"As I proceeded up the banks of the Indus," says he, "parties large and small were continually passing me on the road and I found that the name of Ahmad Shah Ghazi was in the mouth of every one."¹

The next important halt was at Pirkot, the headquarters of Sayyid Sibghatullah Shah, the founder of the Hur movement. He came under the influence of the Sayyid and though he himself did not proceed to the Frontier, he espoused the cause of the *jihād* in Sind.

From Pirkot the party proceeded to Shikarpur and thence *via* Jagan, Khangarh and Bhag to Dhadar. This was the worst part of the journey because of intense heat—it was June-July—lack of water, the presence of hordes of robbers and the generally unsettled conditions. Dhadar is situated at the hill-end of the Bolan pass and the passage through the pass was quite a hazardous affair. However, the party after leaving the pass behind found itself in a more agreeable climate. At Quetta they were well looked after. Great hospitality

¹ Charles Masson, "*Baluchistan, Afghanistan and the Punjab*", I, 144 (London 1842).

was showered on them. But active support of Mihrab Khan, the chieftain of Baluchistan, was not forthcoming.

Then the Sayyid turned towards Afghanistan. Qandahar, Ghazni and Kabul were the chief centres visited by him before he proceeded towards Peshawar and established his headquarters at Naushera. Throughout this long and arduous journey, while the sincerity and enthusiasm of the Sayyid and his companions were admired, their equipment for such an ambitious enterprise seemed altogether inadequate. This explains the rather poor response from rulers and chieftains. With the exception of Tonk, none of the Muslim principalities came forward to help him to any appreciable degree. It was different so far as the people were concerned. Large numbers came to join him. At Qandahar the number of his companions increased considerably. It is stated that thousands of people in Qandahar were keen on accompanying him. The authorities in Qandahar became somewhat nervous and tried to discourage the Sayyid from recruiting such a large number of people. Ultimately he selected 270 persons and organized them into a separate company under the command of Din Muhammad of Qandahar. Others were advised to wait till they were summoned for the *jihad*.

While in Afghanistan, the Sayyid was introduced to the bitter differences which prevailed among the Afghans. It was these differences which so much weakened the Afghan nation that it became an easy prey for the Sikhs. Qandahar and Baluchistan were on the verge of war. The Ghilzais, former rulers of Afghanistan were hostile to the Durranis, the rulers at that time. The *sardars* of Afghanistan were all working against one another. The Sayyid did what he could to reconcile the irreconcilables, but in vain. His stay at Kabul, though long, was not fruitful largely owing to these differences. Though he did not succeed in enlisting

the support of the various rulers, his message was having its effect on the people. From Kabul he proceeded towards Peshawar. After a short stay in that city in November 1826, he finally made Naushera his headquarters (December 1826). The stage was now set for the *jihad* against the Sikhs.

In accordance with the Islamic *Shari'at*, which required the issuing of an ultimatum before hostilities started, a proclamation was addressed to Ranjit Singh. In this proclamation conditions were put forward for his compliance, failing which he should make ready for war. He was warned that "the whole of Afghanistan and India were with the *mujahidin* to whom martyrdom was dearer than wine to the Sikhs." Ranjit Singh did not pay any heed to this ultimatum.

The Sayyid now got ready for an attack on the Sikh forces, which were led by Budh Singh, a cousin of Ranjit Singh. These troops were stationed at Akora, a distance of sixteen miles from Naushera. Their numbers are estimated at seven to ten thousand. The Sayyid organized his forces and decided upon a night assault so that the Sikhs whose numbers were much larger might be taken by surprise. A good deal of thought was given to the planning of this engagement. This being the first encounter its importance was recognized, for if successful, it could not but create greater confidence among the *mujahidin*. The forces at the disposal of the Sayyid had three constituent elements—the Hindustanis, the Qandaharis and the locals from the neighbourhood. The *mujahidin* were led by Allah Bakhsh Khan and the assault occurred in the early hours of 21 December, 1826. It was singularly successful. A large number of Sikhs were killed. They are reported to have lost 700 men. The losses among the *mujahidin* were 36 Hindustanis and 46 Qandaharis killed—the first to fall being Maulvi Baqar 'Ali of 'Azimabad. They also lost their commander, Allah Bakhsh Khan.

The night assault caused a good deal of demoralisation among the Sikh forces and Budh Singh decided to withdraw from Akora ; and to the *mujahidin* the encounter brought considerable encouragement and established their reputation as brave fighters. It impressed the Pathans. They became inclined to regard the Sayyid as the chief instrument for liberating them from Sikh domination. Several Pathan chiefs now also joined the Sayyid's circle of disciples and among them was Khadi Khan of Hund, Ashraf Khan of Zaida and Fath Khan of Panjtar. At the request of Khadi Khan the Sayyid made Hund his headquarters.

But a serious matter came to light. This was the eagerness of the locals for loot. As soon as they got hold of enough booty, they began to leave in twos or threes while only the Hindustanis and the Qandaharis were left to do the fighting.

Another encounter took place at Hazro (now in the district of Campbellpur) soon after Akora. This was with the avowed object of looting a prosperous little town ruled by the Sikhs. Though the attack was organized by the local Pathans, who were joined by a small section of the Qandaharis, in the end when things were not going too well, the Hindustani *mujahidin* had to come to their help. At Hazro the story of Akora was repeated in the matter of booty. Khadi Khan asked the Pathans to collect all the booty in one place and to distribute it in accordance with the behests of the Sayyid. But this proved too much for the indisciplined hordes. They were not prepared to accept this proposition and ultimately every one was left with the booty he carried with him.

What happened at Akora and Hazro clearly indicated the imperative necessity for greater discipline and more efficient organization if success was to be achieved against the Sikhs. There was no central authority in the area ; it was essential for the successful prosecution of the

jihād that at least for this limited purpose such an authority should be established without further delay. It was therefore decided in a meeting of chiefs, scholars and other important personages from among the *mujahidin*, as well as the local population, held on the January 11, 1827, that the Sayyid should assume authority as *imam*. Already the Hindustani *mujahidin* used to address him as *Amir-ul-Mominin*. The people of the area from now on called him "Sayyid Badshah"; and the Sikhs usually referred to him as "Khalifah."

The *imamat* of the Sayyid did not mean the end of the various principalities. The control of the local chieftains and *sardars* did not disappear. The *imamat* was in the nature of a supreme authority created for a single purpose, the prosecution of the *jihād*. It was in the nature of an alliance or at best a loose confederacy.

The chiefs and commoners, who now performed the *bai'at*, accepted the Sayyid as their *imam*. An important new convert was Fath Khan of Panjtar, who proved of great assistance to the Sayyid. The Sayyid's name now came to be mentioned in the Friday *khutbah*. English writers have also referred to the striking of coin in his name, for which there is no evidence and this should therefore be treated as a figment of their imagination.¹ The declaration of *imamat*, however, not only created an organization for the prosecution of the *jihād*, but it also strengthened the reform movement in the religious and social spheres. The various chieftains, who were members of this alliance, committed themselves to the enforcement of Islamic laws within their jurisdiction and accepted the obligation of spending a reasonable portion of their revenues on *jihād*.

With the establishment of the *imamat* the movement for *jihād* entered a new and prosperous phase. Within two months the Sayyid had at his disposal a large number of fighters. Their numbers were estimated at 80,000.

¹ The story of striking coins first occurs in Princep's "History of the Sikhs" (published originally in 1834). It was later accepted uncritically by others.

Many Khans and *sardars* had already become his disciples ; now many more showed eagerness to submit to him, among whom the most prominent were Yar Muhammad Khan and the other *sardars* of Peshawar. How far they were sincere in their offers is a different question. Yar Muhammad Khan might have been led by the exceptional appeal which the *jihad* movement made among the Yusufzais.¹ The *sardars* of Peshawar had a *lashkar* of 20,000 strong with eight pieces of cannon.

The time now seemed ripe to throw out a challenge to the Sikhs. The plan was to besiege and attack the fort at Attock. But a hurdle had to be crossed before this could be done. A considerable Sikh force, under Budh Singh was concentrated to the west of the Indus at Shaidu, not far from Akora. This force was about thirty-five thousand strong. The *sardars* of Peshawar seemed to be particularly keen on fighting the Sikhs. Yet it was they who let the Sayyid down. Firstly the night before the encounter, the Sayyid was given poisoned food by Yar Muhammad Khan's servants, which very nearly proved fatal. This, however, did not deter him from accompanying the *mujahidin* in accordance with the time-table agreed upon. When battle was joined the next morning (14th Phagun — March 1827) in spite of the Sikh superiority in equipment and training, the *mujahidin* gave a good account of themselves. For several days Budh Singh was in serious difficulty. Suddenly an unexpected development took place. Budh Singh got in touch with the *sardars* of Peshawar. Threats and inducements had their effect. Yar Muhammad Khan, who had been in the fore-front decided to desert the cause. With his followers he withdrew from the battle-field. This caused great consternation. The battle, which had till then gone well for the *mujahidin*, now went against them ; victory was turned into defeat. In the general slaughter by the Sikh soldiery, six thousand Muslim lives were lost.² The forces assembled by the

Amar Nath, " *Zafarnamah* ", p. 181.
Ibid.

Sayyid were scattered and the Sayyid himself, unconscious because of the effect of the poison, was extricated with difficulty.

Yar Muhammad's reward for the treachery was that the amount of the Peshawar tribute was doubled by the Sikhs, and Yar Muhammad's son was taken as a hostage. The Muslims nicknamed him 'Yaru Singh.'

The importance attached to this victory by the Sikhs may be gauged from the way it was celebrated. Lahore and other Sikh towns were illuminated. Ranjit Singh gave away thousands of rupees to the poor and the needy and held a royal feast.²

This defeat brought into sharp relief two weaknesses—one related to the organizational side of the movement, particularly the lack of a uniformity of purpose among its adherents, the other to the relations with the *sardars* of Peshawar. Though Sayyid Ahmad had been declared the *imam* or the leader of the *jihad*, there was really neither a single paramount authority nor a unified command. Men fought under their own banners and their own leaders. The temptation to loot caused serious problems. To ensure success a greater uniformity of outlook was essential. And even if it was not a feasible proposition to bring all the various tribes and chieftains under one centralized administration it was at least possible to create among them a feeling of greater discipline and a love of Islamic ideals. Pathan society was suffering from many social evils at the time. A good deal of spade work had to be done before the Sayyid could think of once more undertaking any large scale attack against the Sikhs.

The other problem which had to be solved was to put an end to the opposition from within the Muslim ranks. If Yar Muhammad Khan could be punished for his misdeeds, it would make an example for others

¹ Charles Masson, "*Baluchistan, Afghanistan and the Punjab*", Vol. I, p. 14.

"*Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* ", p. 341.

and it would pave the way for concentrating all efforts against the Sikhs.

The Sayyid now turned his attention to a solution of these problems.

To begin with the Sayyid made an extensive tour of the Yusufzai territories including Chamla, Dunair and Swat and finally made Khar his headquarters. He exhorted the people of these areas to unite and to put an end to Sikh depredations. He also established contact with several Panjtar tribes—Afridis, Mahmands and Khalils and invited them to join the *jihad* which was being waged under his leadership. Hundreds of thousands of people pledged their support. Among the rulers in the neighbourhood, Sulaiman Shah, the *Wali* of Chitral offered the Sayyid all possible assistance and promised to join the Sayyid's forces in person.

While the Sayyid was himself touring Bunair and Swat, Maulvi Isma'il Shahid was concentrating on the district of Hazara, where he achieved considerable success. Hazara had suffered very much from Sikh excesses. The movement of *jihad* had its own appeal for them. Many chiefs of Hazara joined the cause; among them were Sarbuland Khan of Tanawal, Habibullah Khan Swati after whom Garhi Habibullah was later named, Sultan Zabardast Khan and Sultan Najaf Khan of Muzaffarabad, Khan 'Abdul Ghafur Khan of Agror, Nasir Khan of Nandhiar and Pinda Khan of Amb.

In Hazara several skirmishes took place between the *mujahidin* under the leadership of Shah Isma'il Shahid and the Sikh forces of which two—at Damgala and Shinkiari—were fairly fierce (September-October, 1827). Shah Isma'il who had been known for his oratorical gifts and scholarship proved himself an excellent organizer and a fearless leader on the field of battle. While the encounter at Damgala was organized by Shah Isma'il it was actually led by Sayyid Muhammad Muqim, but

at Shinkiari Shah Isma'il himself led his forces. In both these encounters the *mujahidin* fought with such bravery that the Sikh troops were greatly demoralized. Shah Isma'il had planned to continue these assaults against the Sikhs in Hazara but he was called by the Sayyid to his side to deal with the *sardars* of Peshawar. The Sayyid had secured considerable support from the areas which he had recently toured and the forces at his command had also been strengthened by the arrival of fresh recruits from the sub continent. The organization which had been set up during previous years was now producing results. Numerous parties had left their homes under the leadership of trusted lieutenants such as Sayyid Ahmad 'Ali of Rai-Bareli, Maulana 'Inayat 'Ali of 'Azimabad, Maulvi Khurram 'Ali of Bilhaur (Qannauj), and others to join the Sayyid. They had come after overcoming numerous difficulties. A few of them were dissatisfied with the conditions prevailing in the camp and with the conduct of the *jihad*. Maulvi Mahbub 'Ali of Delhi and Miran Shah of Narnaul were among these. But they were the exceptions. Arrangements were also made for raising funds and for transmitting them to the *mujahidin*. To begin with the various parties, which came from different places, brought money with them. At a somewhat later stage money was transmitted through *hundis* or bills of exchange on the *sahukars* (the fore-runners of modern banks) of Peshawar and when Peshawar later became out of bounds for the *mujahidin* because of the hostility of its *sardars*, on those of Manara.

At this stage it was decided to deal with the Durrani menace for without it, success in the fight against the Sikhs was impossible. Yar Muhammad Khan had done everything in his power to put obstacles in the way of the Sayyid, and his followers would have been justified in declaring war against Yar Muhammad Khan in view of his definitely hostile attitude which constituted a

serious impediment to the *jihad* ; but the Sayyid hesitated and rightly. After all he had not come all the way to this part of the world to fight against fellow Muslims. His ambition was to free the Muslim territories of the north-west and the Panjab from Sikh tyranny. But the latest step taken by Yar Muhammad Khan left him no option. When the Sayyid learnt on good authority that a Durrani *lashkar* had passed the river Lunde and reached Utmanzai with the avowed purpose of attacking the *majahidin* the Sayyid made up his mind and decided to attack the *lashkar*. He was supported in this decision by numerous local Khans and 'ulama. The attack on Utmanzai was carried out (1828). The battle lasted for a whole day. Some of the Khans, who had been with the Sayyid, went over to the opposite camp, compelling the Sayyid to withdraw his forces at night. The encounter proved indecisive. This, however, was not so serious a matter : what was serious, was the undependability of the allies.

To lessen the chances of desertion by the local chiefs a stricter form of compact than the one envisaged in the earlier *bai'at* seemed to be necessary. Up till now the Sayyid was accepted as leader only in the field of battle. Now another *bai'at* was arranged which aimed at the strict enforcement of the *Shar'*. It was felt that the enforcement of the laws of Islam was an essential prerequisite for the success of the *jihad*. Many of the social customs among the Pathans were not in conformity with the teachings of Islam. It was decided to have a regular organization for the purpose under the Sayyid. The decision was taken at Panjtar to which the Sayyid had shifted from Khaibar after the Battle of Utmanzai. For the Khans of the area it was difficult to translate the ideas into practice but many accepted them whole-heartedly, for example Fath Khan of Panjtar and Ashraf Khan of Zaida. It was different with Khadi Khan of Hund, who in spite of the *bai'at* which he

performed, did not consider the scheme practicable. He was also dissatisfied because of the growing confidence, the Sayyid placed in his rival, Fath Khan of Panjtar. Shortly afterwards this led to his deserting the cause of the *jihad* and secretly allying himself with the Sikhs.

Panjtar now became the centre of the movement. The fresh *bai'at* did not mean the setting up of a new state or the disappearance of the authority of the Khans. All it meant was that the Khans would enforce the *Shari'at* whenever local customs came in conflict with it.

It was shortly after this *bai'at* that a plan was prepared for the conquest of the fort at Attock the strategic importance of which was obvious. If the Sikhs could be dislodged from here, not only would the frontier be freed from their domination, but the way would be opened for an attack on the Panjab itself. Khadi Khan, it was suspected, had conveyed secret information of the imminent attack to the Sikh commander of the fortress. Consequently the whole plan ended in a fiasco.

The next conflict took place at Panjtar. The initiative was taken by the Sikhs. Ventura, the French general in the service of Ranjit Singh decided to make an offensive against the *mujahidin*, whose presence alone constituted a regular menace to Sikh interests. The Sayyid took necessary precautions and made whatever arrangements he could for the defence of his positions. The *mujahidin* took full advantage of the mountainous country. They adopted tactics suited to the occasion which made Ventura withdraw without achieving his objective. Though the Sikh force was much larger than that of the *mujahidin*, Ventura was led to believe that the *mujahidin* outnumbered the forces at his command and this made him withdraw. For the *mujahidin* this was an achievement of no mean importance. It was the success of a small but determined group of individuals against a more numerous and much better

equipped enemy. Ventura's reputation as a brilliant leader received a serious set-back.

Having for the time being dealt successfully with the Sikh menace the Sayyid thought of teaching Khadi Khan a lesson. Khadi Khan was secretly in alliance with the Sikhs. These followed the Battle of Hund which ended in defeat and death of Khadi Khan (1829).

Yar Muhammad Khan now championed the cause of Khadi Khan and decided to carry the war into the Sayyid's stronghold. Khadi Khan's death had created fresh enmity against the Sayyid among the Khan's relations who gave their full cooperation to Yar Muhammad Khan. Though Ashraf Khan of Zaida was a devout follower of the Sayyid, his eldest son, Muqarrab Khan, who happened to be related to Khadi Khan by marriage, became embittered at Khadi Khan's death and thought of defying the Sayyid. But his own brothers and relations did not see eye to eye with him. Muqarrab Khan left Zaida to organize opposition to the Sayyid and joined hands with Yar Muhammad Khan who sent an ultimatum to the Sayyid to vacate Zaida immediately, failing which strong measures would be adopted. The Sayyid rejected the ultimatum. Thus Zaida became the scene of a major engagement between Yar Muhammad Khan and the *mujahidin* (1829). Modern weapons of war including cannon were fully employed in the battle. Yar Muhammad Khan and his supporters fled from the field of battle. Yar Muhammad Khan himself received a wound which proved fatal. Three hundred of his supporters were killed and the Sayyid's forces reaped a rich harvest of booty in the shape of horses, guns, swords and several pieces of cannon. The losses of the *mujahidin* were negligible.

Thus the two most prominent opponents of the Sayyid, Khadi Khan of Hund and Yar Muhammad Khan of Peshawar were liquidated. It should not have

been difficult for the Sayyid to carry the war into Peshawar itself, but he halted. Perhaps he thought that now that Yar Muhammad Khan was no more, his brothers Sultan Muhammad and others would behave differently and the factors which had necessitated action against Yar Muhammad Khan would not reappear. His real concern was to deal with the Sikhs. So he turned his attention towards Hazara and Kashmir. But history was to repeat itself. What Khadi Khan and Yar Muhammad Khan had done elsewhere, Pinda Khan of Amb was to do in Hazara. However, Pinda Khan was defeated in the battle of Ashra and Amb. It was only after these places were conquered that a battle took place with the Sikhs at Phulra. The Sikhs adopted "Hit and Run" tactics. They caused considerable losses. Among those killed were Sayyid Ahmad 'Ali, the Sayyid's nephew and Mir Faiz 'Ali of Gorakhpur. The Battle of Phulra was followed by several smaller skirmishes. Ranjit Singh on the one hand strengthened his forces and placed them under some of his best men, Sher Singh, Ventura and Allard, and on the other he initiated peace negotiations through Wazir Singh and Faqir 'Azizuddin. These negotiations were doomed to failure. The two parties had so very different outlooks on life that there was hardly any meeting ground.

A new difficulty arose in the Sayyid's relations with the Peshawar *sardars*. Sultan Muhammad Khan exhorted by his mother and encouraged by some of the khans who were not happy at the enforcement of *Shar'iat*, particularly the payment of *'ushr*, decided to avenge his brother's death. This led to the Battle of Toru in which the Durrani lost heavily. On the side of the *mujahidin* the casualties included 20 killed. The *mujahidin* conquered Peshawar (1830) without further resistance. But instead of removing Sultan Muhammad Khan the Sayyid kept him as the governor of the city. This

happened after Sultan Muhammad had sought pardon and pledged himself to the establishment of the laws of Islam. The Sayyid pardoned him much against the wishes of many of his followers who did not believe in Sultan Muhammad Khan's sincerity. Maulana Sayyid Mazhar 'Ali of 'Azimabad was appointed the *qazi* of the town and a number of other associates were given responsible positions. The Sayyid himself retired to Panjtar.

The conquest of Peshawar established the Sayyid as the most important figure in the politics of the region. His reputation stood at its zenith. But two factors brought about a serious situation for the *mujahidin* within a very short time—one of these was the insincerity of Sultan Muhammad Khan who really never forgave or forgot the death of his brother at the hands of the *mujahidin*. He was determined to take revenge. The other was the enthusiasm with which the representatives of the Sayyid tried to enforce the *Shari'at*. However noble the object, it was not wise on their part to ignore altogether the prevailing customs. They went to extremes in applying the laws of Islam with the result that they made themselves thoroughly unpopular. In particular the imposition of tithes caused resentment. Sultan Muhammad Khan took advantage of this discontent. He arranged for the killing of Sayyid Mazhar 'Ali and of all the collectors of tithes. The killings took place in a single night—some were done to death while saying the late evening and early morning prayers. The murders seem to have been planned down to the minutest details. The simultaneous attacks in numerous places could not have occurred without a regular conspiracy.

The killings caused great consternation in the Sayyid's camp. All that had been won seemed, at one single stroke, to have been lost. No single event in the course of the long struggle had been so disturbing and painful to the leaders of the movement. The Sayyid had no

option but to work out his plans for the *jihad* afresh. He decided to leave this region for good and to concentrate his efforts against the Sikhs in Hazara and Kashmir.

After leaving Panjtar at the end of 1830 the Sayyid made Rajduwari his headquarters, and from here he established contact with the various petty chieftains, persuading them to join him in freeing Kashmir and Hazara from the Sikhs. The *mujahidin* in conjunction with the local population fought against the Sikhs at Bhogarmang and Muzaffarabad during this period. With the coming of spring Rajduwari became unsafe. Balakot was chosen as the headquarters because it was easy to defend and because of its proximity to the Kaghan valley and Kashmir. The last battle of the Sayyid's career was to be fought at this very place in the beginning of May 1831. Balakot is a small town in the subdivision of Mansehra, in the district of Hazara. It is situated on the Kaghan river and is protected on three sides by high mountains. Such were its natural defences that the Sayyid regarded Balakot as inaccessible to the Sikhs, a miscalculation, which proved very costly.¹

The Sayyid's presence in the area was a constant source of anxiety to the Sikh general, Sher Singh. He decided to strike at Balakot. He concentrated his forces at a short distance from Balakot. There were two routes leading to the town, one of which having been long abandoned was covered by shrubs and trees, and the other passed over a small bridge. The Sayyid took steps to guard the two entrances to Balakot, but these were inadequate. The result was that when Sher Singh, apparently informed by some locals about the abandoned route, decided to march on Balakot, the *mujahid* guards were overwhelmed. The Sayyid's followers were confronted with a large number of Sikh troops. A fierce battle followed which ended in a hand to hand fight. The *mujahidin* fought desperately but

¹ That the Sayyid considered Balakot impregnable is evident from the letter dated the 25th April, 1831, which he wrote to Nawab Wazir-ud-Daulah of Tonk, quoted by Abul 'Ali Nadwi in "*Strat-I-Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*", pp. 225-226.

suffered heavily. Superior numbers and better equipment won the day. Nearly six hundred *mujahidin* were killed. The leader of the movement himself along with his chief lieutenant Shah Isma'il died fighting till the end. For the time being it seemed as if all was over.

The causes of the failure of the movement were many. To begin with there was a great disparity in respect of training and equipment between the opposing forces. Ranjit Singh had built up his army into a highly efficient fighting machine. It was trained and in some cases led by French and Italian soldiers of fortune who possessed experience of modern warfare. Its discipline was of a high order. Judged by the then prevailing standards its equipment was modern. As opposed to this the *mujahidin* were drawn from various parts of the sub continent, were poorly equipped and without proper military training. This deficiency was partly met by their devotion to a great cause. It could not, however, completely negate the superiority of the Sikh army. The result was that the *mujahidin*, though quite successful in guerilla warfare and sudden night assaults, were unable to achieve success in regular and large scale engagements.

Ranjit Singh, moreover, did not depend entirely upon his army to meet the challenge of the *mujahidin*. He sowed dissension among the Pathan supporters of the Sayyid by bribery and intrigue. When straight fighting did not produce quick results, Ranjit Singh employed these weapons freely. His policy paid handsome dividends.

Complete cooperation between the Hindustani followers of the Sayyid and the local populace was never fully achieved. The ill-will between them was caused by several factors. It developed into open hostility after the Battle of Shaidu in which Yar Muhammad Khan deserted the *mujahidin*.

Inter-tribal jealousies of the Pathans created serious difficulties for the Sayyid. To cite only one example : even when the Ghilzais showed eagerness to join the

Sayyid, he tactfully prevented them from doing so, because that would annoy their rivals, the Durrani, who had made common cause with the Sayyid at an early date. Many Pathan chieftains were at daggers drawn with one another. If the Sayyid sought alliance with one, it was bound to affect the attitude of the other towards him. Khadi Khan's hostility may be cited as an example ; this was largely due to the friendly relations which the Sayyid had established with Fath Khan. Some Pathan chieftains felt that the Sayyid trusted his Hindustani followers more than he trusted them, and this caused discontent among them. To this must be added the feeling among the Khans that they would be reduced to insignificance if the Sayyid was successful. They also did not like the importance which he attached to the religious leaders and Sayyids, who though highly respected were considered by the Khans ill-suited to interfere in administration.

Finance proved to be yet another difficulty. It has been mentioned that funds were raised throughout the sub continent for the movement, but they were never sufficient to carry on a regular war against a powerful enemy. When relations with Peshawar deteriorated, the transmission of these funds became difficult. Attempts were made to raise funds locally. At first not much difficulty was experienced in collecting tithes but soon the tax created discontent. In an under-developed and poor region like the Frontier of those days, nothing could be more irritating to the people than to pay taxes. Taxation became all the more irksome because it was collected regularly and evaders were punished severely. All this, apart from the general dislocation caused by several years of war, made the payment of taxes difficult.

The Sayyid and his lieutenants, perhaps in their zeal for the cause, did not quite take into consideration the peculiar mentality of the Pathan. They seem to have thought of putting an end to the old order at one stroke. The appointment of *qazis* in the country-side for the adjudication of disputes and the punishment of

offenders strictly according to the *Shari'at* proved a little too much for the Pathans. Many of the social reforms which the *Mujahidin* were keen on introducing, notably those connected with the marriage of girls, became highly unpopular. Had they been better students of Pathan psychology they would not have committed such mistake and would have gone slowly.

In addition one cannot ignore the importance of the sectarian propaganda which was carried on in the Frontier by a section of the *maulvis* who disapproved of the efforts at reform which were being made by some followers of the Sayyid who stood close to Wahhabism.

All these factors taken together caused the numerous set-backs to the movement which culminated in the defeat of Balakot and the death of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. But such had been the training given to a large number of men by the Sayyid that the movement, though, it undoubtedly received a serious blow, did not come to an end with him.

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